

# The Modern Language Journal

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# The Modern Language Journal

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## THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER AS A NATIONAL ASSET IN RECONSTRUCTION

By CLAUDE C. SPIKER

WHAT foreign language teacher has not felt humiliation because of the lack of public appreciation of the importance of his work, and because of public indifference toward his department? While other departments of high school and college have received frequent calls for addresses by public and professional gatherings his department has been passed by. Departments of education, agriculture, vocational training, domestic science, athletics, have responded to frequent calls from organizations active in civic and economic betterment, while the departments of foreign languages have received an occasional call from some woman's literary or travel club of the so-called cultural type. In short, the foreign language profession has received comparatively little recognition among the virile, constructive groups of the community.

Previous to the World War the public was perhaps justified to a considerable extent in its attitude of indifference toward the foreign language profession. As a people we were scarcely aware that our interests extended beyond our own territories. Our political traditions were against entangling alliances with foreign peoples. The balance between our urban and rural population was such that no serious question of obtaining foreign markets for our manufactured products had arisen. Being a debtor nation, we could count upon our foreign creditors expending a considerable portion of their dividends in the purchase of raw material from our farms and mines, thus supplying, without effort on our part, a safe market for our surplus products. Our merchant marine was insignificant: consequently we could remain contentedly at

home and permit other nations to transport our products in their own ships. Further, we felt under no particular obligation to cultivate the good will of other nationals. We believed ourselves worthy of their admiration, but if they did not accord it to us—well, so much the worse for them! A congressman might tickle the ears of his foreign born constituency by sharp criticism of a traditional enemy of the country of their birth, or extol the self-righteousness of the native born by anthematizing the sins of all not beneath the protecting stars of our national colors. It was “up to the foreigner” to assume the initiative, seek our products in our own land, and deal with us in our own fashion.

Even from the cultural viewpoint our dependence upon other civilizations was diminishing. As our own national point of view became more pronounced, and our faith in our own culture stronger, our dependence upon English culture lessened. Less frequently did men of English birth occupy positions of influence in our educational institutions. We even received with hesitation into public life our own nationals who had been in close contact with English affairs. Fewer English books and periodicals came into the hands of American readers. American plays supplanted English ones in our theaters. Previous to 1870 Epes Sargent might write:

Bah! Home-made calicoes are well enough,  
But home-made dramas must be stupid stuff.  
Had it the London stamp 'twould do—but then  
For plays we lack the manners and the men.

But almost a decade ago Dean Howells declared: “I would rather take my chance of pleasure and profit with a new American play than with any other sort of new play.” And since the day of Walt Whitman the rugged, virile note of American poetry has struck a more responsive chord in the heart of the American public than the gentler inspiration of the older civilization.

It is true that delicacy, the dominant note in French culture, has persisted in its appeal to American femininity in many affairs of *mode*. But in spite of the traditional friendship of the two countries, the most manifest cultural exchange has been the adoption by each nation of the more frivolous and fleeting popular manifestations of the other. The American public purchases extremes of fashion, while the French adopt our dances, our syncopated music,



and jazz! We have, it is true, absorbed into our culture many more worthy ideas from the French, but the American public is scarcely conscious of our indebtedness for these.

With Germany our cultural bond was closer. The Germans were the recognized leaders in the development of the modern scientific culture. Since this type of culture extends man's contact with his environment and strengthens his control over the forces of nature, it consequently yields large returns in material wealth. The practical turn of mind of the Yankee, coupled to the great opportunities offered for the exploitation of this type of culture in the still undeveloped resources of America, resulted in our embracing it with enthusiasm. Through this means our contact with Germany grew. Our students flocked to German universities and German professors were called to positions of influence in our own schools. The scientific method was learned and successfully applied by our scholars. In its application to problems in the humanistic and religious fields, we followed German leadership until the conquests of science were little less complete in America than in Germany. When the war estranged the two countries, America was already sufficiently schooled in the new culture no longer to feel urgent need of foreign guidance. We had reached the point where we were ready to relax our cultural hold upon Germany, just as we had done with England a generation or two before. Never in her history had America felt so independent of other nations, politically, economically, and culturally, as at the outbreak of the war in 1914.

But we emerged from the war in several respects a changed nation. War brought home the fact that we were no longer really isolated economically and politically from the rest of the world. Through the agency of the new culture we had so extended our contact with our environment that in several ways we were closely bound up in the complexities of life beyond our borders. Increased facilities for communication had encouraged economic dependence of one nation upon another and consequently developed closer political relations.

A debtor nation in 1914, we emerged a creditor nation in 1918. No longer do the dividends from his investments in America furnish the European customers a credit with which to purchase our surplus products. His securities have been dissipated in the

waste of war, and, in addition, he has accumulated a debt of some fifteen billions of dollars, on which interest is accumulating in our favor. Through the exigencies of war we came into possession of a large merchant marine. This must not now lie idle in our ports: we must carry our products abroad in our own boats. Consequently we must now sell to the foreign buyer, not in the United States, but in his markets. Perhaps a still more significant change has been the rapid shifting of our population from the rural districts to the cities. Attracted by a war-stimulated market for our manufactured products, the rural population flocked to the manufacturing centers, until at present more than fifty-one percent of the population of the nation is urban. To maintain this abnormally large urban population, foreign markets must be obtained for a large part of the products of its labor. For it would be folly to hope that the nation can make use of the output of so large a manufacturing population and at the same time absorb enough foreign commodities to pay the interest on foreign indebtedness here.

Obviously if we as a nation are to maintain the present status of our civilization we must have extensive foreign markets. And we must carry our own products and sell them in foreign markets. No longer can we afford to wait at home for the foreign purchaser: we must go to him. This implies dealing with him in his own *milieu*. Our salesmen must meet *his* point of view; our manufacturers must adjust their products to *his* needs and *his* taste.

The war has also wrought certain changes in our cultural relations with other countries. It has effectually destroyed our strongest point of contact with European culture in divorcing us from Germany. And with it has gone much of our enthusiasm for all foreign culture. Never have we actually been so independent of foreign culture. Never has the American genius been so free to manifest itself. But it is yet too soon to foresee the result. It may be that the American genius is not yet sufficiently mature to bear fruit worthy of a great nation. Among nations we are still an adolescent. Our enthusiasms are violent but short lived. Our impulses often lack the wholesome direction of well developed national traditions. Our idealism has often to struggle against a very vigorous realism which seeks to debase it for commercial advantage. Our sense of appreciation of aes-

thetic form and of technique is perhaps still too immature to call forth the best in our writers and artists.

Thus we find ourselves at present a nation nourished on political traditions of isolation; with commercial habits created by domestic trade, and poorly adapted to foreign commerce; and with no strong cultural bond with an older civilization. We are, in short, a nation fitted to play a passive part in world affairs, but impelled by force of changes in our economical life to assume the rôle of leader in commercial and financial affairs. It is obvious that there must be a readjustment. Either we must surrender our control of world finance, dispose of our merchant marine, and permit our urban population to shrink to the point where extensive foreign markets are no longer a necessity, or, maintaining the present status of our civilization, adjust ourselves to these new conditions. We shall not willingly surrender these advantages thrust upon us during a struggle for world supremacy. We shall attempt to fit ourselves for the new rôle. But with our characteristic impatience we shall probably seek a short cut to the desired end. The first impulse of the nation will be to legislate itself into adjustment with the new order of world affairs. And we shall be indeed fortunate if we do not aggravate rather than cure the trouble with a dose of this popular national cure-all. Too many conditions beyond our control enter into the problem to permit of a solution by the application of legislative formulae to material factors. The time has come when there must be a humanistic rather than a scientific adjustment: the mental habits of the people must be modified to fit a changed environment. And mental habits are not readily changed by legislation alone. A process of education must precede it, if the results are to be efficacious. While changed physical conditions have created the problem, its solution depends upon the proper spiritual adjustment. To the scientific belongs without a doubt much of the credit for having created the problem. But does it not remain for the humanist to solve it? Since the material conditions are now too far reaching to be all under our control must not the adjustment be largely subjective, and effected within ourselves?

Our new position among nations now obliges us to assume the initiative in commercial, and consequently political intercourse. To succeed in this new rôle we must modify our attitude toward other nationals.

Believing implicitly in the destiny of the American genius and in the incomparable greatness of our country, we have failed to recognize the worth of other peoples. While we have not been without interest in them, we have too often considered most other nationals as worthy subjects for reform. And we have been generous in our efforts to better their religious and political conditions. We have zealously sought to convince them of our up-to-dateness and of our superiority in business affairs. And not infrequently have we endeavored to impose upon them our own taste along with the products of our factories. But humanity does not love the reformer and we cannot hope to advance our commercial interests in the face of strong competition so long as our attitude conveys to our clients a sense of their own inferiority.

The first and most important step in the solution of the problem is therefore this: The American public must be taught the worth of the individual who, by no fault of his own, expresses his thought and emotions in an idiom other than "United States." And before we as a nation can appreciate the worth of our foreign neighbor we must receive a sympathetic introduction to his civilization. It is here that the foreign language teacher must make his contribution to the solution of the problem. For it is only through the medium of its language that one enters sympathetically into a foreign civilization.

For those who are not familiar with its language, a civilization can create only an impersonal and unsympathetic interest. I may see my neighbor who lives across the street go and come. I may know the style of his automobile, I may have caught an occasional glimpse of his domicile through his open door. I may have learned something of his commercial and political activities through the press. Through the gossip of the neighbors I have learned something of his tastes and of the eccentricities of his family. But unless I have met the man, conversed with him, listened to his public appeals from forum and press, I shall lack a sympathetic interest in him. His joys and sorrows leave me unmoved. He is a part of my environment and nothing more. So long as he is orderly and does not infringe upon my personal or property rights, I may remain impassive. Or, perhaps, if his personal habits differ too far from my own I may resent



them: I may criticise his taste in neckties and ridicule his affection for his dog. But a mutual friend introduces us. I talk with him. In so doing I catch his point of view. There is something in his personality that pleases me. I discover that his interests in life are not fundamentally so very different from my own, but that due to his having been reared in a different environment, his views and opinions do not always coincide with mine. But through contact with his personality I am able to overlook these differences of opinion or to excuse them on the ground of early prejudices formed by his environment. My impersonal attitude toward him has become humanistic and sympathetic, for I have felt his personal worth. I am now more tolerant of his peculiarities in personal taste; I do not lose my temper if his dog chases my cat, and I am more considerate in my conduct that I may not annoy or offend him.

Now the process of getting acquainted with my neighbor who lives across my national border and who speaks another language does not differ essentially from that by which I became acquainted with my neighbor across the street. It, too, is through the medium of language. I may see him less often, it is true, but I can read in his own words his thoughts and ideals, and through his style I am brought in touch with his personality. I can, through imitating his speech, enter into his psychology and see life for the moment from his point of view. And the results upon my attitude toward him will be similar to those in the case of my neighbor across the street. Years of study of his history and an occasional trip to his country cannot bring me into this sympathetic attitude toward him. Through language alone can I enter sympathetically into his civilization.

Interrogation of several hundred American soldiers, unfamiliar with the French language after six months in France, revealed the fact that at least two thirds of them "were disappointed with France." Why? "Because she's not up to date." They had judged a great nation largely by her plumbing and her agricultural implements. A similar examination of a group that were on the point of returning to America the following year after having spent from twelve to eighteen months in the country, brought out the fact that men who were ignorant of the language were without exception "fed up with the French and tired of

their country." They were tired of the people and professed to find nothing to admire in their civilization. But on the other hand, a number of men who were sufficiently familiar with the language to converse with the people in French and to read their periodicals were, almost without exception, fond of the French and found much to admire in their civilization.

In many of the countries with which we must carry on commercial relations, the results of the modern material civilization are less marked than in the United States. Consequently the personal factor in business transactions has been less reduced under the demand for efficiency than at home. Even in the smallest transaction, in addition to the exchange of values, there is an appreciable exchange of personality. This may express itself in "bargaining" or in a more extensive exchange of social amenities than with us. And in transactions of greater importance the social factor assumes a place too important to disregard. In our own civilization men live largely *in* their business. Business is life to them. In the less up-to-date type of civilization business constitutes the means of earning a livelihood, but men live largely *outside* of their business. Their interest is accordingly keener in social and aesthetic activities. They are still primarily humanists. The field of approach to their attention is consequently broader and more difficult than at home. Sympathetic appreciation of the personality of the client and of things in which he is interested beyond his business are primary prerequisites to successful salesmanship.

But more important still than the equipping of prospective salesmen with passports to the sympathies of their future clients, is the task of developing among the voters of the nation a sentiment of consideration for the feelings and welfare of foreign peoples. This is essential before we can hope for a consistent and stable direction of our foreign policy. Due to our former isolation, we do not hesitate to introduce into our domestic politics questions that vitally concern the welfare of peoples beyond our borders. Such questions are not infrequently prostituted to party advantage, and during our political campaigns we too often discuss other peoples with a frankness that does not always contribute to the creation of an *entente cordiale*. Aside from the impressions unfavorable to us that result from our too free discussion of other

nationals, the custom of submitting to popular discussion and suffrage issues involving our foreign policy results in vacillation and uncertainty. Mistrust of our foreign policy is created and our sincerity questioned. This must be remedied by the creation among the masses and—I might add—among men elected to positions of influence and leadership, of a higher regard for other nationals. We have often told ourselves that we are the greatest people on earth, but in so doing we have seldom taken the other peoples into comparison. We need to be taught to *compare* ourselves with other peoples, and our civilization with theirs. And it is very largely through the foreign language profession that a proper knowledge of other peoples must come to us.

Here, then, is the task of the foreign language teacher in America. He must assist in the training of commercial and financial agents sent out by American firms and corporations into other countries. He must see to it that they go out capable of appreciating the life of the people with whom they are to deal, and that their attitude toward other civilizations is such as to inspire confidence among other nationals in our own. He must labor to create among the people at home a higher regard for other nationals, a respect for points of view not coinciding with our own, and a national desire to please other peoples. During a time when our enthusiasm in all foreign culture is at a low ebb he must be the principal agency in keeping us in touch with foreign cultural development. And he must do all this, not in the name of "culture," but in a desire to promote our national welfare and to preserve the present status of the United States among nations. The public may not immediately recognize the value of his profession as a national asset. The next Congress may not encourage and reward his labor by the passage of a "Smith-Hughes" bill. But shall he go unrewarded? No, for he is a humanist.

*West Virginia University*

## THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN COLLEGE COURSES IN THE MODERN LANGUAGES

By J. PRESTON HOSKINS

THE widespread desire on the part of students for some speaking command of the modern languages, the extensive adoption, particularly in our high-schools, of the direct principle of instruction and the growing demand in our secondary schools for teachers properly trained to give instruction in French, German or Spanish have rendered the entire question of 'the medium of instruction' a matter of urgent consideration and discussion.<sup>1</sup> This question of the extent to which the foreign language could and should be used in conducting courses of different grade and character is probably one in regard to which collegiate institutions in America are more at variance than in regard to any other of equal fundamental importance. This wide diversity both of opinion as well as of practice is due not only to the fact that modern language instruction is today in a state of transition but also to the conflict—or supposed conflict—between the cultural and vocational ideals in education and to the great variety of local conditions under which the normal schools, the colleges, and the universities of the land are compelled to carry on the work of higher education. But two acts are nevertheless outstanding. There is a general consensus of opinion that every teacher of the modern languages should have a fluent speaking knowledge of the language he essays to teach and it is equally clear that whatever attitude is assumed toward the use of the foreign language in the class-room or in lecture courses, it should be the result of carefully considered departmental policy and not be left haphazard to the preferences of individual instructors.

The question of the use of the foreign tongue in the class-room as the medium of instruction may be looked at from several

<sup>1</sup> It is a matter of great regret that the Report of the Committee on the Collegiate Training of Teachers of the Modern Foreign Languages appointed by the M. L. A. in 1914 has never been published. This report contains a complete survey of the whole situation as well as some valuable recommendations as to method and procedure. The writer here begs leave to acknowledge his indebtedness to the Preliminary Report and to certain sections of the finished report which he has been permitted to see in copy.



different viewpoints which cross and interpenetrate one another. First and foremost is to be considered whether the aim of the course is literary or linguistic. The question may be treated from the side of the professor or from the side of the student. The method adopted in either literary or linguistic study has a direct bearing on the question and finally, since the war, the national as opposed to the international point of view has become a factor of more than pedagogical significance.

Theoretically speaking, it would be an ideal condition of affairs if both professors and students were equally well-versed in both English and the foreign tongue so that it would be a matter of indifference, so far as the medium of instruction is concerned, whether English or the foreign tongue were used. But practically it is more than questionable whether such conditions are attainable or even desirable in the case of every student. Certainly they do not exist at present except in a few communities where college classes are made up largely of students who are bilingual from childhood on. So far as English speaking students are concerned, it may be affirmed that, at the present time, the methods of instruction used in the secondary schools and continued for the first year in college do not produce results sufficient to warrant the instructor in using the foreign tongue in literary courses. The attempts made hitherto in some of our women's colleges and elsewhere to have lectures on the literature delivered in French or German have, from the literary point of view, proved to be very much hit or miss affairs because of the unpreparedness of the students. How much such courses have contributed toward a practical understanding of the foreign language is another question, but certain it is that the attempt, under present conditions, to combine the linguistic and literary aims in teaching is bound to lead either to the sacrifice of literary and aesthetic appreciation, i. e., to the virtual nullification of the cultural value of literary study, or to become a very expensive and inefficient method of imparting practical mastery of a foreign tongue.

From the viewpoint of the professor it is furthermore an open question how desirable he may feel it to be to use the foreign language in his lectures and literary courses. I do not mean to imply that he or she is not sufficiently master of the foreign tongue to do this well enough for pedagogical purposes. But the fact

remains that only in exceptional cases will an American born teacher who has acquired his foreign language after the age of childhood by the usual methods of study at home and abroad, be able to do his best work in a foreign tongue, just as a foreign born teacher who comes to this country will feel more at home in his mother tongue than he will in English. Lectures or discussions, therefore, which aim to go beyond the mere outline of plots, summaries of the contents of literary works, concrete biographical sketches, synoptic views of literary periods, etc., in other words deal with what are the facts about literature and to attempt a finer aesthetic analysis, criticism, appreciation and evaluation of literary works, or a wider historic, philosophical or social view of literary periods, will undoubtedly be done much better in the mother tongue by the average American born professor. To be sure he may write such lectures in English and then translate them into the foreign idiom but here arises at once the difficulty in all translations of reproducing in the foreign language the fine discriminations and the subtle *nuances* of appreciation which may constitute almost the very essence of his personal criticism and his national point of view. Certain it is that only very few will be able to do this thing equally well in two languages.

This last observation leads naturally to a question emphasized as never before by the war: how far is it right and profitable that a foreign literature should be interpreted and criticised from its own national point of view and how far is the use of the foreign tongue in such interpretations and criticisms likely to influence what should be our national American viewpoint? We study a foreign literature as the most direct means of becoming acquainted with the national character, customs, history, and ideals of a foreign people. Literature is, in a true sense, the reflection of the national soul. We want to learn to appreciate the other fellow's point of view, to understand how he thinks and feels, to find out what aspects and experiences of human life appeal most to him. But this broadening of our intellectual horizon and deepening of our human sympathies, this recognition that there are other ways of attaining certain desirable ends than the one with which we are most familiar, does not mean that we must or can appropriate and assimilate foreign languages, foreign literatures and foreign institutions in their entirety. Some of the ele-

ments involved in them may be bought at the expense of others which are more precious to us. The proletarian socialist may whittle down his national or international viewpoint to a strictly economic basis and claim that his fatherland is wherever he finds work, but the educated American will not so lightly forego his national heritage and national ideals. He is justified in accepting and assimilating only such foreign elements as are compatible with our national aims and ideals. As a composite people, made up of elements drawn from many nations already, comparatively speaking, highly civilized which we are attempting to unite and render homogeneous under a democratic ideal, we can afford to appropriate the beneficent elements of European civilization only in so far as they comport with that ideal. And in the present state of social and political development this can be done best for the great majority of Americans through the medium of one national language.

Far more important than the convenience and equipment of the instructor, or national vs. foreign interpretation and criticism of literature, is the practical question of the attitude and preparation of the student. Does his previous preparation and the purpose he has in studying the foreign language in college enable him to profit more by the use of the English or the foreign language as the medium of instruction? As has been previously remarked the answer to this question, in the present state of modern language instruction, would undoubtedly be that he will profit far more from a cultural and educational point of view by the use of English. This follows not only from the fact that in the majority of cases he has not been taught the foreign tongue with the direct purpose of understanding it when spoken, but also from the fact that his own purpose is to acquire only a reading knowledge as a basis for further literary study or as a means of using foreign books in other lines of work. This it must be acknowledged is the purpose of the great majority of our students, for only a comparatively small minority in any class pursue the study of modern languages beyond freshman or sophomore year.

But at this point the fact must be taken into consideration that modern language instruction is, at the present time, undergoing a transition. During the last ten years dissatisfaction with the old classical, grammar-translation method of teaching has

become pretty general all over the country. The current is undoubtedly setting in strongly in favor of the direct principle of instruction, in which the foreign tongue is to be made the medium of instruction from the very beginning. The pupil is to be taught not only to read and translate French, German or Spanish, but to pronounce it correctly, to answer simple questions in it and to write it to a limited extent. In other words a firm foundation is to be laid for a practical reading, writing and speaking knowledge.

So far as the courses of freshman year are concerned, there should be little difficulty in meeting this situation. In fact many of our eastern colleges have already adjusted their courses to meet this new demand. The use of the foreign tongue in the classroom and of texts dealing with practical every-day life, which lend themselves readily to spoken and written exercises on the part of the student, is being introduced as rapidly as the varying conditions and circumstances warrant. The great majority of our students, therefore, who drop their modern language courses at the end of the first college year may reasonably expect to have attained all the practical mastery that the time devoted to the subject will permit. They will, by that time, have acquired a good reading knowledge and have taken the first and most difficult steps in the process of learning to write and to speak the foreign tongue.

But the crux of the problem for the colleges does not lie in the work of freshman year. The difficulty of the situation arises in regard to the adjustment of courses from freshman year on, the courses in literature proper. Here both opinion and practice differ widely. At the one extreme are to be found those who demand that all courses should be conducted in the foreign language and at the other those who claim that English is the only language that should be used in literary courses.

At the first glance it would seem to follow that the colleges must continue the use of the foreign tongue in courses in literature in order that the student may develop and perfect the elementary knowledge that he has brought with him from the secondary school and has increased and organized during his freshman year. For is it not illogical as well as unfair to insist on the use of the foreign tongue or the direct method in elementary work if the



college is not willing to develop this beginning into a practical speaking command, along literary, philological and pedagogical lines? This contention has certainly considerable to be said for it. At the same time it seems to me that certain distinctions must be drawn at this point.

In the first place one may believe that the direct method is the very best way to teach a foreign language and set entrance examinations on this principle without feeling at all constrained to use the foreign tongue in his lectures on the literature, for the simple reason that in the one case his aim is to inculcate a practical mastery of the foreign language while in the other he aims to impart a knowledge, appreciation, and critical evaluation of literature. His aim in the first case is practical, in the second aesthetic and cultural.

In the second place a distinction must be drawn between different classes of students, between the great majority in our eastern institutions for whom a reading knowledge and a first hand acquaintance with some of the great literary masterpieces is the sole cultural aim, and the minority, who, with a pedagogical or other end in view, must have a much more thorough training in speaking and writing the foreign language as a preparation for their profession. In other words a distinction must be made between students who are studying foreign languages with a cultural and those who are studying with a vocational end in view. So far as the number of each class in our undergraduate courses is concerned it will be found to differ widely in different institutions. In the Preliminary Report of the Committee on the Collegiate Training of Teachers of Modern Foreign Languages it was pointed out that in the private institutions of the East and South only a very small percentage of the seniors doing advanced work plan to teach, while in many of our larger state institutions a large number of candidates amounting in numerous instances to from 75 percent to "practically all" were studying the modern languages with a view to making the teaching of them their vocation. Thus the problem of the use of the foreign idiom in literature courses is a very complex one, impossible to answer with a categorical "yes" or "no," but demanding a different solution under different circumstances.

Thirdly we must have a clear conception at the outset of what we mean by a practical speaking and writing command of the foreign language, in other words a clear idea of what we really can accomplish in the way of teaching American students to speak a foreign tongue. The attempts to use a foreign language in literary courses which have hitherto come under my observation have been mostly hit or miss affairs given on the correct assumption that it was good for the student to hear as much spoken French or German as possible, but overlooking the fact that a student will never learn a foreign language by mere listening and that this is probably the least profitable way of spending his time at this stage of study. The lack of uniform preparation for such lectures on the part of the students simply rendered the critical and cultural aim of the lecturer null and void.

Now the practical mastery of a modern language that I believe our colleges and universities must attempt to furnish involves an ability to read, write and speak the foreign tongue sufficient to meet the demands of ordinary every-day life among the people who speak that language. It does not imply that the speaker should be taken for a native, but it does imply that he should be on a level with the average native in the ordinary affairs of life. This mastery does not undertake to give the student an active literary vocabulary, it does not undertake to teach him to write books or even essays in the foreign tongue. It only attempts to put him in a position to make use of all these for his own future development and to hold an intelligent conversation about every day topics, such, for example, as are furnished daily by the newspaper. Now I believe the colleges and universities can furnish the student a practical mastery in this sense of the word and I believe the time has come when the modern language departments in our colleges and universities must set about establishing courses in the three upper years with this end in view.

But it is from the viewpoint of such a practical mastery as I have just described that the weakness of the use of the foreign tongue in literary instruction comes most clearly to light. The vocabulary used in lectures and discussions on literature is very different from the common vocabulary of everyday life. From such lectures, therefore, the student is not likely to acquire the words and expressions most valuable for a practical mastery of the lan-

guage and, on the other hand, he is not likely to profit by such lectures unless he already possesses such a practical mastery as the means of comprehension and the standard of comparison.

The attempt to conduct courses in literature in the foreign tongue according to the usual class-room method of question and answer is likely to prove even a greater waste of time if the student is required to answer in that tongue. The time spent in correcting his mistakes will take most of the hour and turn the course practically into a linguistic one. The average student will not have an active vocabulary of a kind to express himself clearly in literary matters. In fact this subject of vocabulary is one which is only now beginning to receive the attention that it deserves in linguistic instruction.

The same, I think, holds true also of the practice of requiring themes on literary subjects written in the foreign language. It is by no means every student who can write a good theme on an English subject in English. That students should be not only encouraged but required to use works in the foreign tongue in literary courses goes without saying. In fact, a course in literature without collateral reading is a course in which the instructor does all the work. The practice of making the student find out for himself at least one-half to three-fourths of the matter usually included in the introductions to our American annotated editions of foreign literary works is a goal toward which college instructors should all work in literary courses. But after the student has gathered his materials I believe the majority of students should be required to write them up in good English rather than the foreign tongue. In English he will be able to express himself freely, to show appreciation and, perhaps, to express intelligent judgments. On the other hand, if he is required to write French or German the time and effort spent in attempting to express himself with grammatical correctness is likely to swamp critical and literary appreciation completely. Of course I do not mean to imply that he should not quote passages in the foreign tongue. That he should do. But his efforts to combine the results of his outside reading and study into a well-rounded whole, to show, in a word, that he has really grasped the chief characteristics and significance of an author or literary work, has made some advance in intelligent analysis, criticism and appreciation will, for the average student, have to

be done under present conditions in English or not at all. The attempt to use the foreign language will, in all but very exceptional cases, defeat the very end of his studies.

If the foregoing premises and observations be correct the inference is clear. The solution of the problem of the use of English versus the foreign tongue in collegiate courses in the modern languages lies in a distinction between linguistic and literary courses, and in a division of our students into two classes: those who are studying the modern languages with a cultural aim for which a fluent reading knowledge is sufficient and those who have teaching or some other vocational end in view for which a practical mastery of the spoken language is an absolute prerequisite.

For the great majority in our eastern institutions who desire only a reading knowledge of the foreign tongue and a first hand acquaintance with its leading masterpieces, literary courses in the three upper collegiate years, consisting of lectures, class-room interpretations and discussions on the part of the instructor and occasional themes on the part of the student, can be conducted most profitably for every one concerned, as at present, in the English language. A large part of the collateral reading should be done by the student in the foreign language, and the instructor, as far as the circumstances warrant, should feel at liberty to present concrete information in the foreign tongue about the works, authors, periods, etc. under consideration. But to attempt to do the work of the whole course in the foreign idiom will completely ruin its critical and aesthetic value for this class of students, and be of very doubtful worth as a means of inculcating a practical speaking knowledge of the language.

For the smaller group, however, I believe, that the true solution of the problem will be found in the establishment of courses in the second, third and fourth college years, parallel to the courses in literature which shall be conducted in the foreign language and which, in their content and aim, shall be adapted to the particular end the students have in view: a practical writing and speaking command of the foreign language. Whether these courses be called practice courses, conversational courses or courses in composition makes little difference, provided the work in them be done in small groups, be carefully graded and be



continued over a period sufficient to furnish the student abundant opportunity for the use of the foreign tongue both in speaking and writing. The establishment of such courses does not mean that this group should not take also the courses in literature conducted in English nor avail itself of every opportunity outside the class-room to make use of the foreign tongue. Nor does it mean that the study of literature should be wholly excluded but it does mean that practice in speaking and writing the foreign language must be the chief end to which all other considerations, literary included, must be subordinated.

As the material for such courses subjects can be chosen which supplement the work in the literary courses or bear directly on the equipment for teaching or other practical vocation; for example the history of the foreign country, its customs, political institutions, social movements, press, etc., or the history of the language under consideration, its syntax, synonymy, etc., designed to give the student not only a thorough understanding of the language but also of the life and civilization of the people. Formal lecture courses in the foreign tongue either on the literature or other subjects should not be introduced until it is certain the group will thoroughly understand them and is able to take good notes, certainly not before junior and, more probably, not before senior year.

Of course the chief difficulty of establishing adequate practice courses of this kind lies in the fact that a large number of instructors is required to do the work efficiently, for work of this kind must be done with small groups of students. Additional instructors mean additional outlay for the university. But I am inclined to think that the practical demands made upon the educated man in respect to his knowledge of some one of the modern languages will ere long be imperative enough to make it necessary for the larger colleges and universities to establish practice courses of some kind or other in the upper years of the four year course. Modern language departments will have to be provided with additional instructors, for the same reason that laboratory courses in the sciences must have a large number of assistants, if the student is to be properly supervised and trained in his experimental work.

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## COMMON MISTAKES IN OUR FRENCH TEXTBOOKS I. ON SO-CALLED DIRECT-METHOD EXERCISES

*By F. J. KUENY*

**D**IRECT-METHOD exercises have become a fixture in the newer French grammars as well as in readers and editions of texts. To what extent they are a habit of the classroom is problematical. Students generally report that all the books they have read in high school had direct-method exercises; many, however, admit that their teacher never paid any attention to the questions in French listed at the end of a play or novel. It would seem, therefore, that one certain effect of the institution has been to increase the shortage of printing paper. Yet there are other teachers, and many of them, who make excellent use of the questions in French, and the results they obtain amply justify the institution. Whether used or not, the direct-method exercise is a fact, a printed fact, and as such it is fit subject for a critical examination. The present article will occasionally quote a grammar or "French Course," but in the main it considers the editions of well known French texts.

In the first place, having attained the dignity of a necessary feature, the direct-method exercise is liable to share the fate of all things necessary. It has the endorsement of the superintendent and the ambitious teacher. The publisher demands it of the editor because the other fellows are selling it; it makes a good "talking point" for the salesman. The "trade" insists on having it, and the trade gets it in large quantities. As a result, it is largely done in a perfunctory, haphazard, careless, slipshod way. The editor, too often, complies with the letter, rather than the spirit, of the requirement; his heart is not in it; he lacks enthusiasm, he even lacks sincerity. Too often he draws up a list of monotonous, uninteresting questions that sometimes make one wonder if the editor uses his own book: "Qui est. . .? Qui fait. . .? Que fait-il? Où. . .? Quand. . .?" To be sure, such questions are legitimate, they are useful and necessary. They compel the student to read his text and read it over until he understands

it in a way. But is there no other method, even with beginners, of reading a text to advantage? A well known New York teacher has been insisting for some time that the student change the tenses, and the persons, and pronouns, and possessives. The latest editor of *Colomba* offers the following suggestion: "Vous êtes la femme Madeleine Pietri; racontez ce que vous avez vu, ce que vous avez entendu, ce que vous avez fait." The practice should be more common. How many teachers remember that a text can be acted and that to act a text is the best way of understanding it? How many make their questions "direct" to the point where they become a part and expression of the pupil's own life? Let us take the ever popular *Abbé Constantin*. The thing and the rage now is the "interesting" book. Why not the interesting question? It is possible to frame a question that will direct one student to say to the other: "Quand vous aurez vingt ans, on demandera votre main pour un jeune exilé qui. . . On demandera votre main pour un jeune prince qui. . . On demandera votre main. . ." nearly a whole page with many grammatical problems. If the passage has been memorized, the exercise will embody the best features of correct teaching. (Chapter V.)

There is fancy and zest in the preceding suggestion. The following passage, taken from the same novel (Chap. III,) is both shorter and more in line with real conditions: "Ma soeur et moi, nous parlons français, avec un peu d'accent, sans doute, et avec certaines formules américaines, mais enfin de manière à dire à peu près tout ce que nous voulons dire." The sentence has several idioms and can be turned in many ways: "Ma soeur et ma cousine parlent. . . Vous parlez. . . Mon grand-père et ma grand-mère, qui sont morts, parlaient. . . Si vous continuez à bien travailler, vous parlerez. . . Si j'avais la bonne fortune de passer une année en France, je parlerais. . . Si nous pouvions aller passer six mois seulement en France, nous parlerions. . ." The picture of Jean's simple tastes can be utilized in the same effective manner: "Il s'était laissé conduire, une dizaine de fois peut-être. . ." (Chap. IV.) Many other passages, in fact, practically every sequence of verbs, can be dramatized to great advantage, and the pupils will learn their verbs and pronouns.

Some readers may object that in doing this work we would drift too far away from our programs, that we have the regents'

examinations, and the like. The answer is that we are supposed to teach French and that the more French we teach the better our classes will be, that no official regulation fixes a maximum limit that we must not pass, whereas many books set the minimum limit very low. Returning to the examination of these books, can we discover any indication as to the nature and purposes of the direct-method exercises? Plainly, do we know what we are doing when we use the books? Do their authors know what they are doing? Specifically, is the exercise merely a device intended to help the teacher in checking up the work of his class? Should it be graded, or should a text of medium difficulty be made the subject of the same sort of exercises as an elementary reader or an advanced text? And how should the questions be asked? Orally, by the teacher, or read by the pupil? How should they be answered? Orally, or in writing? From the open book or from memory? In the elaborate language of the French author, or in the natural phrases of a familiar conversation? This is not very clear in the minds of certain people. We hear much in prefaces and directions about "training the ear of the student"; we are told that a given set of stories "may be made the basis for practically endless exercises in conversation." Conversation is the word, and all over the country French classes are conversing. But what is the practice? "*Répétez les questions des juges et les réponses de Jeanne. Donnez les questions des maçons et les réponses de Camille. Répétez ce que le plus âgé des maçons dit à Camille. Décrivez la Corse dans les mots du capitaine Ellis. Décrivez le jeune militaire qu'ils trouvèrent sur le port. Racontez ce que le colonel essaya de donner au jeune homme et les deux avis qu'il en reçut. Décrivez la jeune femme qui entra dans la ville le lendemain, montée sur un cheval de petite taille. Décrivez l'enterrement de la femme du colonel della Rebbia.*" The student is called upon to "quote" from five to fifteen lines of his text. Is that "conversation"? Many questions are not asked in conversational style. The following are long-winded, circumstantial and guarded like the questions put by a lawyer: "Quel pays avait ennuyé la fille du colonel et avait le tort immense de n'avoir pas tous les gibiers possibles? Quelles objections fit le colonel pour irriter l'heureux caprice (ô Musset!) de miss Lydia? De quel sublime poète Orso lit-il un chant après que miss Lydia eut essayé plusieurs sujets

de conversation? Combien d'années se passèrent de cette sorte avant qu'Orso revint dans son pays pour vendre ses propriétés et vivre après sur le continent?" Why not ask simple questions, questions that a man can pronounce and a child can understand? Why not something on the following order: Qu'est-ce que le colonel Nevil? Où est-il? Il y a longtemps? Il est seul? Où est sa femme? D'où viennent-ils? Et l'Italie leur a beaucoup plu? Non? pourquoi pas? Et où vont-ils maintenant?" These questions are too simple? Try them, and when your students answer them correctly and readily, ask three or four questions at a time and demand that they be answered in a single sentence. But you must always be simple in conversation. You cannot speak as Mérimée writes. Mérimée did not speak as he wrote. The text of *Colomba* was not intended, and in its wording it cannot be used, as a basis for conversation.

And how about the tenses used in these "conversations"? French practice, as regards uses of the past definite, is so poorly presented in many elementary grammars that it would take a long chapter to explain the question. It will be enough to say here, but it must be said with the utmost emphasis, that the French never use the past definite in a conversational way. The same is true of the past anterior, whose auxiliary is in the past definite. There is no need of making a trip to France to verify this statement; we have in printed form several hundred contemporary French comedies; many of these plays were considered good enough to open the doors of the *Académie*; we can read play after play, and whole plays will not offer a single instance of a past definite; the few, very few, past definites that occur here or there all represent something else than plain conversation. On the other hand, when telling a story, the Frenchman will make the affair more vivid by using the present indicative instead of the compound past indefinite. In spite of the misgivings that still prevail in some quarters, a few grammars express a saner view on the subject of the uses of the past definite. At least the view appears in their theory and "rules"; but how difficult it is to break away from certain habits is shown in their exercises. One grammar, for instance, teaches on one page that "in conversational style the past indefinite is used instead of the past definite"; and the opposite page has an exercise entitled "Conversation" and consisting of

six sentences of which four are in the past definite, with no past indefinite at all. A few authors of direct-method exercises whose books are chiefly intended for junior schools, make systematic use of the present indicative and past indefinite, and ignore the past definite entirely; their tone is plainly conversational; they play a simple game and they know the rules of the game. Others, who write for more advanced students, mingle the past definite and past indefinite, and that is legitimate when we consider both the nature of the text on which they base their exercises and the tone of these exercises; but those "who know" never state in their prefaces that the text is followed by a set of "exercises in conversation." Their attitude is correct; their reserve and silence are, perhaps, too correct. In view of present conditions, these authors would confer a favor upon many teachers by telling the lesser element who are also using their books that a succession of questions and answers does not necessarily constitute a conversation, and that any one who wishes to use their books for practice in conversation will have to make over every question that included a past definite. Finally, too many authors have neither the wisdom nor the reserve of those of the second group; their voices are emphatic and loud in favor of conversation and helping the teacher with endless suggestions, while at the same time they introduce droves of past definites and past anteriors and other noble characters, fallen from the grandeur that was theirs in history or fiction, still dressed in their splendid rags, and now running amuck against rhetorical convention and breaking every law of syntax. The mad whirl is too much for even so strong a head as Colomba; the personification of true Corsican tradition is converted to English nationality: "Que fit *miss* Colomba en bonne catholique avant de manger?"

Plainly speaking, the direct-method exercise is not incompatible with the use of the past definite, or the past anterior, or any literary form of expression. It has more possibilities than some of its blind admirers can imagine. When practised in the proper spirit, it trains the ear, it teaches pronunciation, it connects the student's eye knowledge with his ear knowledge, it is the best cure of the dumb blackboard system that teaches a language as algebra is taught, it can teach a whole side of the language not ordinarily found in literary works, it is



a speedy way of teaching composition, and since a language is a system of sounds, the direct method is the proper method for teaching a language. The direct-method exercise explains French in French; it begins an *explication*; its full scope is that of the *explication française*. Call it oral composition, call it *explication*, call it what you will; but if you simply churn over the sentences of a French novel, do not call it conversation.

A very small number of new books begin to widen the scope of their exercises. They ask questions about the notes. They ought to be commended. For the notes are the first instruments designed to facilitate the approach to the text. On the notes the editor spends some of his most arduous work and he expects the student to read and assimilate them. And how about the biography of the author? Is it ever made the subject of any questions in the exercises? This indifference for the author, and for the literary value of his work as well, is not calculated to dispel the strange misgivings that are so common on the subject of French literature. In spite of the ever rising flood of cheap, incorrect readers, we still read and some people still edit that pure masterpiece *Colomba*. Yet thousands of pupils read the book every school day in the year without ever suspecting that Mérimée's French and the French of a certain "interesting" reader (with over 100 grammatical errors) are not of the same quality. If we ask questions to make sure that the student will read the text, why not make equally sure, and in the same manner, that he will read the notes and the introduction? This may necessitate a recasting of a number of prefaces and introductions, which also would be a benefit. A series of questions could begin in the following mood: "Quel est l'auteur de ce livre? C'est un auteur vivant? Il y a longtemps qu'il est mort? En quelle année l'ouvrage a-t-il paru? Cela fait combien de temps? C'était avant ou après la guerre de l'Indépendance? Avant ou après la guerre de Sécession? C'est une édition française que nous avons là? Comment s'appelle le monsieur qui l'a annotée? Et ce monsieur est professeur, n'est-ce pas? Où? Quelle est la maison qui édite le livre? Savez-vous pourquoi j'ai choisi cette édition plutôt qu'une autre? Combien a-t-elle de pages? Est-elle complète ou abrégée? Combien lisons-nous de pages par jour? Où en sommes-nous? Combien nous faudra-t-il pour finir l'ouvrage? Est-ce un roman ou une oeuvre his-

torique? Le lexique donne tous les mots faciles, n'est-ce pas? Y-a-t-il dans la leçon d'aujourd'hui des passages difficiles que les notes n'expliquent pas?" Also remember that a French play or novel is built on well defined lines; it has its logical succession of *exposition*, *noeud*, *péripéties*, *épisodes*, *crise* or *catastrophe*, and *dénouement*. The reproach is often heard that French works of literature are too much ruled by a rigid technique, that they are artificial. Whatever the merits of the criticism from a literary standpoint, this quality of French works is an advantage in the classroom; they are clear, and we should take advantage of the technique when we explain them. Grammars have review lessons, we can also pause at the proper places and ask: "Combien de personnages connaissons-nous jusqu'ici? Quels sont ceux dont nous venons encore de faire la connaissance? Récapitulons tous les efforts qu'a faits Colomba pour obliger Orso à venger son père. Et lui, où en est-il? Ce qui reste en lui du Français. Ce qui a reparu du Corse. Quels sont les deux partis qui divisent Pietranera? Les partisans des della Rebbia. Ceux des Barricini. Et les deux bandits? A quel moment prennent-ils parti? Pour qui? Pourquoi? Quelle différence Mérimée met-il entre le caractère de Brandolaccio et celui de Castriconi? Orso est amoureux de miss Nevil, n'est-ce pas? Depuis quand? Elle le sait? Où et comment l'apprend-elle? Et elle, elle aime Orso? Depuis quand le sait-elle? Qu'est-ce qu'elle aime en lui? Et quel est le rôle du colonel Nevil dans tout cela? Le rôle du préfet?" Is it unusual to find students who have read half a dozen French novels and do not know the French word for "novel"? A certain class in Advanced French had spent about forty hours of actual class work on a volume of selections (277 pages) from Michelet's *Histoire de France*. At the end of the forty hours they had read less than thirty pages, but they were told that they had studied Michelet long enough and that the book was to be discarded for another. In an examination it was shown that they did not know who Michelet was and that most of them were convinced that the 277 pages constituted the whole of his *Histoire de France*. The work complete fills 24 to 28 volumes.

So much for the nature and scope of direct-method exercises. It is with great regret that we add that questions are not always asked in an intelligent way and that too many questions are not

asked in correct French. Too often the editor cuts up his text into a number of slices, then singles out a clause or set of clauses and *in the words* of the text frames a question. The student, on his part must first "catch" the question, then guess to what part of the text it refers, and finally proceed to frame *with the words of the text* a sentence that will answer the question. This mechanical way of preserving the wording of the text leads to strange questions. A passage borrowed from the *Revue bleue* states: "Depuis un siècle, la date de l'ouverture des vacances obéit à une évolution aussi régulière que celle de l'heure du diner, mais en sens inverse: l'heure du diner recule toujours, tandis que les vacances commencent toujours plus tôt." We might ask: "Les vacances ont toujours commencé à la même date? Il y a cent ans? Il y a soixante ans? Et aujourd'hui? C'est une véritable évolution, n'est-ce pas?" Instead, the authors ask: "*La date de l'ouverture des vacances* à quoi obéit-elle?" In a book "edited for intensive study" the student is asked: "Qu'y a-t-il dans un départ?"<sup>8</sup> He has but one guess, for Mérimée wrote: "Il y a toujours quelque chose de solennel dans un départ, même quand on se quitte pour peu de temps." Compare the following questions and their texts:

*Text:* Il n'y a aucun membre ou aucun organe qu'on puisse conserver toujours sain.

*Question:* Qu'est-ce qu'on ne peut pas conserver toujours sain?

*Text:* On jouit surtout de la littérature française du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle.

*Question:* De quoi est-ce qu'on jouit surtout?

*Text:* Il y avait dans la voix et dans l'attitude de Colomba quelque chose d'imposant et de terrible.

*Question:* Qu'y avait-il dans sa voix?

*Text:* Pas un mot de reproche ne s'échappa de ses lèvres. . .

*Question:* Qu'est-ce qui ne s'échappa pas de ses lèvres?

The direct method presupposes, of course, that the editor understands his text. This is not always the case. Take, for instance, this sentence from Mérimée's *Colomba*: "Leurs fusils, crassés à force de tirer, ne portaient plus, mais les soldats étaient formés sur six rangs, la baïonnette au nez des chevaux, on eût dit un mur." One editor wants to know: "Que faisaient les soldats quand leurs fusils crassés ne portaient plus?" Truly, we don't

know. But the danger is that some student will think he knows. He may read "étaient formés" to mean that "the officers then drew up their men in a new formation," whereas for Mérimée they already were in that formation. Another book has this to say about Auvergne: "Le plateau granitique du centre de la France possède aussi un sol bien pauvre, et les districts montagneux de ce plateau subissent depuis longtemps un exode *temporaire* d'hommes cherchant un emploi dans les centres populeux." The question on this slightly alters the text, unfortunately not for the better: "Pourquoi y a-t-il *de temps en temps* un exode d'hommes du plateau central?" *Temporaire* means that the exodus is not permanent; the emigrants return to their native province; *de temps en temps* makes the exodus take place at intervals. So there is such a thing, after all, as not being slavish enough to the text.

We must repeat the text, not slavishly, but intelligently and correctly. Intelligent repetition is the fundamental method of all teaching, especially of language teaching. A language is a habit, after all; we have learned our native language by hearing it, *en écoutant chanter les cigales*, and by repeating what we heard. Drills will do what "rules" cannot do, and it would be gratifying, indeed, to find more drill work in some direct-method books. Take the prepositions, for instance. It is more and more the practice of handbooks to give lists of verbs or adjectives that demand this or that preposition before an infinitive. Thus *couvrir* requires *de*, while its English equivalent takes "with." The most effective way to anchor the group *couvert de* in the student's mind is to drill and repeat: "De quoi mon bureau est-il couvert? Et votre pupitre? Cette lampe? Ce livre? Cette lettre? Le parquet de votre chambre? La table de la salle à manger? Les paquets qui viennent de chez l'épicier? Le corps des animaux? Les oiseaux? La terre en hiver? Les arbres en été? Les oreilles des demoiselles?" Instead, an elementary reader teaches this:

*Text:* ". . . . . il insista *pour* le mener jusqu'à sa porte."

*Question:* "Qu'est-ce qu' il insista *de* faire?"

That question does not repeat enough. On another page the same author repeats too much:

*Text:* "Jamais on n'avait vu rien de pareil."

Question: "Qu'est-ce qu'on n'avait jamais rien vu?"

The following questions are taken from 14 different books published within the last five or six years:

1. Qui sont venus après les oiseaux?
2. Pourquoi est Paris moins propice à un tel drame?
3. Où était toute la famille réunie?
4. Combien de ces fleuves se jettent-ils dans l'Atlantique?
5. Les soldats indigènes prouvent-ils être bons soldats?
6. Écrivez au tableau les numéros cardinaux de vingt à trente.
7. Que Colomba supplia-t-elle le colonel de faire?
8. Avec quels mots le colonel souhaite-t-il bonsoir à M. della Rebbia?
9. Cherchez des adjectifs, des noms, ou des verbes des mots dans cette histoire.
10. En quelle direction viendrez-vous pour aller à l'école?
11. Quel homme et quels animaux y avaient-ils dans la rue?
12. Qu'est-ce qu'il s'écria? Quand cela s'écria-t-il?
13. Qu'est-ce qui lui échappa de dire?
14. Sont-ils sûrs que ce qu'ils achètent vaille?

The last question appears in the "Key" to a composition book; the others are genuine direct-method exercises and are signed by 15 different authors. It would be necessary to tell a rather long story to explain exactly what is wrong with each question. The first mistake, however, has become so common lately that a few more words will, perhaps, be welcome.

The *qui* question has its proper place in the more elementary courses; even there, it may be overdone. Students will soon call it a "cinch" question and a cynic might state that the number of *qui* questions in a book of intermediate or advanced grade varies inversely as the book's pedagogic value. The easy question easily leads to mistakes. It is bound to lead to endless mistakes in the answers. If I ask: "Qui est-ce qui a écrit *les Misérables*?" the answer is not: "Hugo les a écrits"; but: "*C'est Hugo qui les a écrits.*" This *qui*? calls for an emphatic answer, a statement that might well precede every set of direct-method exercises. The answer to *qui*? must be intelligent and correct (Cf. "Qui vous a donné votre première leçon de français?—C'est vous qui me l'avez donnée." A practical suggestion for verb drill.) The *qui*? itself must be asked correctly. When Loti writes: "Ensuite passèrent des sauterelles," the question cannot be: "Qui sont venus après les oiseaux?" The "rule" may never have been stated in a grammar, but interrogative *qui* (subject) is followed by a third person *singular*. The following questions are not correct:

1. Qui viennent au-devant des voyageurs au besoin?
2. Qui tendirent les mains pour recevoir les aumônes?
3. Qui ont mis les précieuses conquêtes en grave péril?
4. Qui bâtirent le monastère?
5. Qui s'étaient mis d'accord pour ne pas se faire la guerre?
6. Qui sont surprises?
7. Qu'est-ce qui se montraient déjà?

The questions represent seven different textbooks published within five or six years and signed by eight different authors. They are not exceptions, for one book makes the mistake nine times in a few pages. Another makes the mistake three times on one page, a bad example of repetition. It should be noted that Loti's grasshoppers cannot be dignified with a personal *qui*; grammatical etiquette classes "sauterelles" with "things"; the question should be: "Et *qu'est-ce qui* est venu après cela?" The neuter *qu'est-ce qui* also must be followed by a singular; the seventh question should be: "Qu'est-ce qui se montrait déjà?" It remained for an editor of dear old *abbé Constantin* to mistake the objective *que* for the subjective *qu'est-ce qui*, and to make the objective *que* the subject of a third person plural: "Deux grosses larmes se détachèrent des yeux du prêtre."—"Que se détachèrent des yeux du prêtre?"

A young man, a graduate of a college that used to have a good French department, admitted that while teaching French last year in a high school he had used one of the books quoted in this article. When asked if he had not noticed the mistakes, he answered that he had had his doubts at times, but that comparing his modest self with the name of the publisher and the name and official connections of the author, he could not think of questioning the printed statements of the book. He had unlearned some of the French he had been taught in college, he had learned and he had taught a new kind of French.

The years 1918 and 1919 each saw the publication of a direct-method grammar whose French title is not correct. One of the books has from sixty to seventy-five expressions that should be corrected; the other has between 120 and 130 bad spots. Both use French at times to teach French grammar and conduct a class in French. Ungrammatical grammar and improper classroom phrases are common enough in our newer textbooks. The enumeration and correction of this class of errors will require a special article.

*University of Maine*



## CLASS PROBLEMS IN ADVANCED SPANISH

By CARLOS CASTILLO

THE problems which confront the teacher of advanced Spanish may be divided for convenience into two classes, namely, those pertaining to pronunciation and those related to grammar.

During the elementary year, especially during the first few weeks, the average teacher puts forth his greatest effort to impart to the pupil a correct pronunciation or one as nearly so as his or her own limitations will allow—a pronunciation as nearly like the teacher's as possible. This effort diminishes in direct proportion as the course progresses until a point is reached where other efforts, such as are required by certain grammar drills, translation, composition, work, call for their share of attention.

On the other hand, grammatical facts, very few at the outset, accumulate rapidly, reaching the pupil daily as unfolded by his First Spanish Course, reinforced later by the First Composition Book, and supported by the grammatical notes of the Reader.

The attitude of the majority in the class is that pronunciation is easy to master, and that all there is to say on the subject was practically exhausted in the first few weeks. On the other hand, the conviction grows that Spanish grammar is not at all easy, that there are numberless little details to bear in mind in order to construct a sentence, that almost every other verb which the student is likely to encounter happens to be irregular or radical changing in the particular tense needed, and that the subjunctive, the passive voice and the reflexive construction are a frequent source of annoyance.

When the pupil is ready to enter a more advanced class he is too often found wanting in the same respects as when he began the subject, namely in pronunciation and in grammar.

I propose in this paper to assume the above statements and present my views under the following headings: (a) reading material; (b) pronunciation and (c) grammar.

### A

Reading material in advanced classes should be of two kinds, (1) material designed for intensive work, and (2) literature for

extensive reading. The purpose of the first is to acquire language training; that of the second, mainly to put the student in contact with Spanish letters, and to awaken in him a taste for good literature.

By reading of an intensive kind is meant the reviewing of the vocabulary with a view to enrich one's fund of active words, and to this end the study of synonyms and antonyms, derivatives, compounds, and cognates in the day's lesson is of great value, a short story or a play being well suited for this purpose. It also embraces the study of every idiom encountered, grammar drill based on the passage, oral and written questions suggested by it, the retelling of the selection, the paraphrasing of idioms, and the like.

The extensive reading, a large share of which must be done as home work, might be made the subject of an oral and written report required for the term.

## B

In regard to pronunciation our goal should be, first, to make the pupil's enunciation intelligible and inoffensive, and second, to make it agreeable. It goes without saying that in the relatively short time devoted to one course it cannot be made *perfect* in the great majority of cases (especially in the case of men students) even at the expense of great effort on the part of the teacher, and to the detriment of other accomplishments in the course. To delve into the minute details of phonetics, such as the multiple shades of the vowels, the intricacies of metaphony, and other subtleties is beyond the province of the average teacher, demanding, as it does, the kind of training designed for specialists. It seems best, therefore, to direct our efforts to eradicate faults obviously offensive to the Spanish ear, such as I will endeavor to outline.

I. The pronunciation of vowels without diphthongization or glide, particularly *e* and *o*. While there are in truth open and close varieties of these letters, the danger of diphthongization by the American student is in the *close* rather than in the *open* variety; an *e* or an *o* considerably more open than it should be is intelligible at least, but the same vowels if only more slightly close than they should be are intolerable. As to the letters *u* and *i*, the reverse is true. The American student tends toward an open variety as found in the English *bit* and *good*, *bitter* and *putting*,

thus pronouncing *domingo*, *mundo*, *segundo*, etc.; hence the close variety of *i* and *u* should be emphasized, if not exclusively and invariably taught. Furthermore, in orthographic combinations of vowels ordinarily called diphthongs by grammarians when either *i* or *u* stands unaccented before a vowel, the semiconsonantal value should be thoroughly understood by the pupil, who tends naturally to separate or divide sounds thus: *ti-e-ne*, *su-a-ve*, *india-no*, etc.

II. Among the consonants the sounds represented by the following, *l*, *d*, *t*, *r*, *b*, *v*, and *g* are worthy of very particular attention. What is more familiar to us than mispronunciations such as *kəb-bæl-io* for *kaballo* (caballo); *t<sup>h</sup>re<sup>i</sup>z* for *tres*; *æg-gwa* for *agwa*<sup>1</sup> (agua); *favoər* for *fabər* (favor); *senjoər* for (*señor*); *χo<sup>u</sup>ze<sup>i</sup>* for *χoze* (José); *kæd-da* for *kaða* (cada); *t<sup>h</sup>ængo* for *tengo* (tengo), and a thousand others.

III. The so-called glottal catch is one of the most difficult defects to eradicate and perhaps the most common of all. It imparts to language that jerky effect comparable to the motion of a springless vehicle on an uneven surface. To help eliminate this cacophony, reading verse aloud, practicing constantly on the same selection is highly desirable. The same prosodic figures occurring in verse, namely, synelepha, sineresis, elisions, and the like, are ever present in the ordinary speech. As an example of convenient poems, I wish to suggest the Rhymes of Becquer, particularly those in which the longer meters predominate, such as the following:

Yo se (un himno gigante y extrañio  
 Que (anuncia en la noche del alma una aurora,  
 Y estas páginas son de ese himno  
 Cadencias que (el aire dilata en las sombras.

IV. One more remark may be made before we leave the matter of pronunciation. There are numberless Spanish words whose spelling immediately suggests to the student the corresponding English equivalent. These groups of words deserve the special

<sup>1</sup>The *g* here represents the Spanish fricative *g*. Our printer has not the correct symbol.

attention of the teacher, as they are almost invariably distorted by a receding shift of stress. Examples, *caridad*, *amabilidad*, *autoridad*, and the multitude of words in *-ción*, and *-sión*, *expresión*, *ocasión*, *variación*; numerous words in *-al*, *animal*, *colosal*, *inicial*; words in *-or*, particularly if longer than two syllables, *picador*, *aparador*, *comedor*, etc.

The above outlined defects and others of similar nature should be more in the mind of the teacher of advanced Spanish than the somewhat ridiculous emphasis placed by many on differences between the Spanish of the Old World and that of the New World, which are very insignificant among the *cultured* persons of the Spanish race and which do not affect the vital question of *correctness*.

### C

On the subject of grammar reviews there are certain specific points which it might be well to have in mind and which merit particular emphasis, among which I wish to suggest the following:

1) The usage of the verbs *ser* and *estar*. Only constant drill and copious examples are of any avail here. Many a student seems to gather his notion from the ordinary rule given a prominent place in his grammar, namely, that *ser* expresses a permanent condition while *estar* expresses a temporary state or idea, and hence when he encounters the sentence, "John was a soldier for two years," he often renders it thus: "Juan estuvo soldado por dos años,"—because of the limitation of time. This notion of permanency for *ser* and the reverse for *estar* seems to be uppermost in the pupil's mind, thus eclipsing other most important considerations, such as *origin* or *extraction*, *ownership*, *material*, the *predicate noun*, which are not duly emphasized in his text, where exercises are often rather scanty.

2) Perhaps equal in importance to the above is the distinction between the preterite and the imperfect of the indicative. It is true here as well as in the *ser-estar* question that the line of demarcation is not always perfectly defined, and that there are instances within a certain *zone* where either tense might properly fit, but at any rate a set of exercises for cases on either side of this neutral zone, so to speak, should be devised, and also a separate set of exercises illustrating that at times the distinction is not so binding, and that either the preterite or the imperfect is acceptable.

University of Chicago

## Notes and News

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHERS

#### *Minutes of the Annual Meeting*

The Executive Committee met in Chicago, September 6, 1921, with J. P. W. Crawford, J. D. Fitz-Gerald, Irvin S. Goodman and C. H. Handschin present and A. Busse and E. F. Hauch represented by proxy.

1. Irvin S. Goodman was chosen temporary chairman.
2. The secretary's report was read and approved and his bill of \$4.67 for telegrams and postage allowed.
3. The following were elected officers for the year. J. P. W. Crawford, President, W. A. Nitze, Vice-President, C. H. Handschin, Secretary.
4. Resolved that, the proper rotation now having been achieved, all associate editors be elected for a term of three years. By this arrangement two editors will be elected every year.
5. B. Q. Morgan, University of Wisconsin, and Ernest J. Hall, Sheffield Scientific School, were elected associate editors of THE MODERN LANGUAGE JOURNAL.
6. Resolved that it be made a rule of the Executive Committee that the minutes of its proceedings be published in THE MODERN LANGUAGE JOURNAL.
7. Resolved that the Business Manager of THE JOURNAL make a financial report to the Executive Committee at its meeting, the report to be audited by a committee.
8. Resolved that if any officer of the Executive Committee is retiring at the end of the year, he carry on the business of his office up to the time of the annual meeting of the Executive Committee and, if unable to attend the meeting, he shall forward to his successor in good season for the meeting, his report, *agenda*, etc. This rule is necessary since the newly elected member, not the retiring one, attends the annual meeting.
9. Upon motion of the Secretary, resolved that any vote taken by mail shall be audited by a committee, in the same manner as the financial report.
10. Resolved to refer to the constituent associations of The National Federation the following change in the constitution, V., d. Strike out the words "between June 1 and September 1."
11. Resolved that THE MODERN LANGUAGE JOURNAL be paid \$1.50 for each subscription coming in thru affiliated associations.



This rule is intended merely to supersede a rule passed by the M. L. T. As to detailed regulation, see following paragraph.

12. Resolved:

(1) That efforts be made by the Executive Committee of the National Federation to form affiliated groups of modern language teachers in cities and states in which no such associations exist at present, such groups to be considered as affiliated with the regional association in whose territory they are situated and to receive each a charter signed by the officers of the National Federation.

(2) That city groups shall be granted a subscription rate of \$1.75 to the MODERN LANGUAGE JOURNAL upon furnishing a minimum of ten subscribers annually if paid thru the secretary of the group.

(3) That state associations be granted the same rate under the same conditions except that they shall furnish a minimum of twenty-five subscribers.

(4) That all groups whether city or state which furnish a minimum of two hundred subscribers shall be granted a rate of \$1.50 under the same conditions and affiliate membership without representation.

(5) That such regional associations may be affiliated directly with the National Federation.

(6) That all of the kinds of groups named above shall enjoy the further privilege of having notes concerning their programs or other events of interest to modern language teachers published in THE MODERN LANGUAGE JOURNAL.

(7) That representation on the Executive Committee of the National Federation shall be granted to affiliated associations on the basis of one committeeman for every three hundred subscriptions to THE MODERN LANGUAGE JOURNAL paid annually thru the secretary of such association, except as provided for otherwise in the constitution of The National Federation.

13. Inasmuch as the effects of the World War on secondary education in the United States have been felt most directly and most severely in the field of modern language instruction, and the imperative need of an investigation of this whole field is too obvious to require discussion, the Executive Committee of The National Federation of Modern Language Teachers hereby respectfully petitions The General Education Board to provide the funds for a survey of modern language instruction in the secondary schools of the United States, similar to the investigations in other departments of secondary education which have been undertaken in the past few years.

Convinced, in view of the educational reconstruction now going on in the United States as a result of the war, that never in

the history of American education has there been so great and timely an opportunity to perform a signal service to American education in general, and to modern language instruction in particular, the Executive Committee of the National Federation pledges its hearty coöperation in the execution of such a plan by lending all the machinery of its organization—its national executive committee and its regional, state and city associations as well as its national organ, 'THE MODERN LANGUAGE JOURNAL,'—to the successful achievement of this object, and by creating such national, regional and state committees as may prove most feasible to carry out the project of a comprehensive and thorough survey of modern language instruction in the secondary schools of the United States.

This resolution to be sent by the Secretary to the General Education Board.

14. Resolved to instruct the Secretary to invite the Modern Language Association of America and The American Association of Teachers of Spanish to consider the advisability of supporting our resolution to the General Education Board.

15. Resolved to invite The American Association of Teachers of Spanish to join The National Federation of Modern Language on the same terms as the other affiliated associations.

16. Resolved that the territory of The M. L. T. be delimited to include, besides the states already affiliated, the states west of the Alleghanies and north of the Ohio and the following states west of the Mississippi: Missouri, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota, North and South Dakota.

17. The auditing committee reported that it had examined the report of the Business Manager and found it to be correct.

J. P. W. CRAWFORD, *President*

C. H. HANDSCHIN, *Secretary*

Professor H. C. Morrison of the School of Education of the University of Chicago, Superintendent of the Laboratory Schools of that institution, has secured a grant from the Commonwealth Fund to undertake investigations on various phases of the learning of French in secondary school. He is being aided by Arthur G. Bovee of the University High School.

Assistant Professor Courtney Bruerton of Dartmouth College has accepted a similar appointment in the Romance department of Tufts. His place at Dartmouth has been filled by the appointment of L. J. Cook of Tufts.

Miss Elizabeth McPike, formerly assistant in French at the University of Chicago, has returned to finish her work for the doctorate at that institution after a year as fellow at the Ecole Normale of Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

Professor Bert E. Young of Vanderbilt, Secretary of the Central Division of the M.L.A., spent the summer vacation in France.

Associate Professor T. L. Neff of the Romance department of the University of Chicago has returned after a nine-month stay in France, having spent most of the time at Grenoble.

Miss Edith Denise, formerly dean of women at Lake Forest College, has taken a temporary instructorship at the University of Idaho in place of Miss J. Ingersoll, who is on leave.

With impressive interest the United States celebrated the six hundredth anniversary of the death of Dante Alighieri in Washington on Oct. 3. Addresses were delivered by the Ambassadors of Italy and of France, and a paper on the significance of Dante's work was ready by Professor Charles H. Grandgent of Harvard University. There have been numerous other celebrations on a smaller scale of this significant event, and in many university and public libraries throughout the country, interesting material bearing on the life and works of the great poet has been placed on public exhibition.

#### CALIFORNIA ITEMS

The Association Française, holding its meetings in San Francisco and at the University of California, has been reorganized and has laid out a very attractive program of work for this year. Its membership is not confined to teachers of the French language, but may include anyone interested in France or things French. The meetings will be held once a month, and will include two features: first, a lecture in French on a general subject pertaining to art, literature or travel; and second, a discourse, followed by discussion, upon some of the following topics: *Phonétique, Méthode Directe, Choix des Livres, Préparation des Universités, Moyens de Diffusion du Français, Que faire des Tolérances Grammaticales, L'Enseignement de l'Histoire de France dans les Ecoles Supérieures*, etc. The president is Professor Régis Michaud of the University of California, and the Secretary is Mrs. Belle Bickford, of the Oakland High School.

Mr. Wm. Schwartz, of the French department of Stanford University, is spending this semester in study and travel in France and Italy. At the last meeting of the Association Française, he gave an illustrated lecture upon "*Mes Observations pendant l'Eruption du Volcan Sakurajima.*"

Mrs. Louisa N. Howard, head of the department of modern languages in the Berkeley High School, has taken a leave of absence for 18 months for the purpose of study in France. Miss Juliette Lévy, of the University High School, Oakland, has taken a year's leave for the same purpose. Mrs. Belle Bickford, of the Oakland High School, has taken her place. Also Miss Rachel

Kurlanzik, teacher of French in the Crocker Intermediate School of San Francisco, has spent the summer and a part of this semester studying in Paris. These leaves show vital ambition on the part of the teachers, as well as coöperation of school authorities.

I. C. H.

#### MAINE NOTES

Philip W. Harry, Associate Professor of Romance Languages in Colby College, spent the summer vacation in Spain.

Several changes have occurred in the modern language faculty of Bates College. Professor Samuel F. Harms has a year's leave of absence which he will spend in study and travel in Spain. Mr. Sydney B. Brown, who has been studying in France during the past year, has returned to the department of Romance Languages. Mr. C. Floyd Whitcomb, formerly instructor of French in the University of Maine, will be instructor of French and Spanish.

Mr. John A. Strausbaugh, instructor in Spanish at the University of Maine, has returned from Cuba, where he spent the summer in study. Miss Frances E. Arnold of the same department attended the Spanish School of Middlebury College.

R. M. P.

#### THE ANCIENT OR THE MODERN LANGUAGES?

Modern language study seems to be under fire in various quarters of the globe. In the United States they are being attacked on utilitarian grounds. Many theorists on education are asked if they are of value in the curriculum of the public schools as compared with studies that may prepare more immediately for citizenship or for business. In France, to judge from a document that has recently reached us, they are threatened, curiously enough, by an attempt to restore Latin and Greek to a position of supremacy in the curriculum. This document is in the shape of a letter issued by the Association des Professeurs des Langues Vivantes, in which members of the Association are informed of certain questions submitted by the Minister of Public Instruction to the members of the Conseil Supérieur de l'Instruction Publique, and are urged to join a "Comité de résistance." We give below the significant portions of this communication.

#### CABINET DU MINISTRE DE L'INSTRUCTION PUBLIQUE ET DES BEAUX-ARTS

##### 1<sup>re</sup> QUESTION

Le Conseil Supérieur de l'Instruction Publique n'estime-t-il pas indispensable de supprimer la division des études secondaires, séparées actuellement en deux cycles?

2<sup>me</sup> QUESTION

Le Conseil Supérieur de l'Instruction Publique ne considère-t-il pas comme nécessaire d'établir un enseignement unique jusqu'au passage en 3<sup>e</sup>, le latin étant obligatoire dans les classes de 6<sup>e</sup>, 5<sup>e</sup>, et 4<sup>e</sup>, et le grec dans cette dernière classe?

3<sup>me</sup> QUESTION

Le Conseil Supérieur de l'Instruction Publique est-il d'avis qu'il soit établi, à partir de la Classe de 3<sup>e</sup>, une division de l'Enseignement en deux Sections:

1<sup>o</sup> Enseignement classique divisé lui-même en:

a) Latin-grec, avec un enseignement scientifique plus développé que dans le plan d'études actuel.

b) Latin-sciences.

2<sup>o</sup> Enseignement Secondaire Moderne.

4<sup>me</sup> QUESTION

Le Conseil Supérieur de l'Instruction Publique n'est-il pas d'avis qu'une différence de sanctions s'imposerait suivant la nature de l'enseignement reçu: le baccalauréat, avec les droits qu'il confère présentement, deviendrait la sanction des études d'enseignement classique (Latin-Grec, Latin-Sciences), tandis que les études de la deuxième section aboutiraient à un diplôme d'enseignement secondaire moderne qui serait admis pour l'inscription dans les établissements et Ecoles d'Enseignement Supérieur, en vue de l'obtention des grades ou titres conférés par l'Etat, sauf la Licence ès Lettres (toutes mentions), les concours de l'Ecole Normale Supérieure et de l'Ecole Nationale des Chartes, la Licence en Droit et le Doctorat en Médecine?

6<sup>me</sup> QUESTION

Les classes de Langues Vivantes étant quelque peu restreintes par suite d'une diminution d'heures, et de la disparition de la seconde langue dans les classes de seconde et de première, le Conseil supérieur de l'Instruction Publique serait-il d'avis d'autoriser les Chefs d'établissements à organiser des cours facultatifs où les élèves pourraient étudier une seconde langue, lorsque ces cours auraient, dès la rentrée, un effectif suffisant d'inscrits?

Dans l'affirmative, le Conseil Supérieur ne jugerait-il pas utile d'autoriser les candidats au baccalauréat et au diplôme d'enseignement secondaire moderne à présenter une seconde langue comme matière supplémentaire avec un coefficient approprié?

Nous apprenons d'autre part qu'un Comité de Résistance a été immédiatement constitué par un certain nombre de membres du Conseil, sous la présidence de M. Ferdinand Brunot, doyen de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Paris.

Il publie l'appel ci-dessous:

"De son Cabinet, sans passer par la Direction de l'Enseignement Secondaire, M. le Ministre de l'Instruction Publique propose une série de mesures dont l'effet sera de reprendre les droits enfin accordés il y a vingt ans aux études modernes.

"S'il était suivi, le baccalauréat ne pourrait plus être obtenu par les élèves qui n'auraient pas fait de latin. Les modernes, quels que puissent être leurs mérites, n'auraient qu'un diplôme inférieur qui ne leur donnerait pas le droit d'entrer à la Faculté de Droit ou de Médecine. On n'a pas osé leur fermer aussi les Facultés des Sciences et les Ecoles scientifiques. Nous n'en sommes qu'à la première Restauration.

"Mais, dès maintenant, nous pouvons voir où la réaction entend nous conduire. La France niant elle-même la valeur de sa propre culture, de sa littérature, de sa philosophie, de son génie, va déclarer à la face du monde stupéfait que tout cela ne suffit pas à la formation de la jeunesse française. Comment dès lors prétendre que cette culture suffise aux étrangers? C'est la faillite volontaire, proclamée au moment où nous avons le plus besoin d'asseoir notre influence morale.

"D'autre part, comme aucune mesure n'est proposée pour réserver les bienfaits de l'enseignement secondaire ainsi constitué à ceux-là seuls qui sont capables de le recevoir, comme il continuera à être donné aux enfants dont les parents peuvent payer, et que ceux qui ne l'auront pas reçu ne pourront par aucune voie trouver accès aux carrières libérales, c'est la démocratie exclue de ses droits, frustrée de ses espérances, au profit d'une classe de privilégiés.

"Que répondre, dans ces conditions, aux apôtres de révolution quand ils parleront de prendre par la force la nouvelle Bastille?

"Contre ce retour au passé qui serait pour l'avenir un immense danger, nous créons dès maintenant un Comité de résistance. Voulez-vous en être?

"FERDINAND BRUNOT, *Doyen de la Faculté des Lettres,*  
KÆNIGS, *Professeur à la Faculté des Sciences,*  
CAPITANT, *Professeur à la Faculté de Droit,*  
Mlle SANUA, Mm. COLIN, GRÉVY, PEYROT, RANCÈS,  
*Membres du Conseil Supérieur."*

At the meeting of the Modern Language Association to be held in Baltimore next December there will be a group to consider the Spanish-American and Brazilian literatures and their place in the curricula of our schools and colleges. All who are interested are invited to attend the meeting.

E. C. HILLS, *Chairman of the Group.*



## Reviews

*A FRENCH READER.* With Phonetic Transcriptions for First Year Students, by HUGH A. SMITH and JEANNE H. GREENLEAF. Henry Holt and Co. Pp. IX+267.

This excellent reader assumes that "the greatest value for the majority who study French in this country will always be a knowledge of French life, thought and literature, which comes almost entirely through reading." Much of the material is "not new," but the authors have "brought together for the first time in one book, for first year work, a considerable number of the texts that have been most successful in early arousing the student's interest and in inspiring him for further reading." The reading matter, which has been selected primarily for beginning college students, begins with a few simple tales; then come in order a part of *Sans Famille*, the delightfully ironic and easy *Pacha Berger, la Dernière Classe*, an excellent passage from *les Misérables* (*Cosette*), two typically bitter Maupassant stories, and some anecdotes and fables. The Hugo selection would gain in clearness and charm through an explanation of the background, with at least a hint of the identity of the charitable stranger; but in general the material is interesting and well chosen, and is not appreciably harmed by a few abridgments and modifications.

The scarcity of notes is unfortunate. There should at least have been a few more of the helpful paraphrases of difficult expressions like that on page 119. For instance the "canal" is abruptly introduced (50, 9) without comment; and constructions like that containing *ne* (112, 7), *ce n'est pas tout ça* (125, 17), *si on y allait* (159, 29), and *qu'on ne l'y prendrait plus* (179, 6), will be far from clear to first year students without a little explanation.

In the appendix there is a good set of questions, and sentences for translation, based upon alternating passages in the text. It might have stimulated interest in phonetic notation and have helped the cause of good oral work if these questions had been written phonetically. A table of the most necessary irregular verbs comes next.

The vocabulary is carefully made, and I am told that the class-room test reveals few if any omissions except *sourd*, though, to be sure, the words in the questionnaire do not seem to have been cared for, judging by the absence of *écolier* (Ex. 29, 1) and *sur* with the sense of "about" (Ex. 25, 5). The following entries seem to the reviewer capable of improvement:—

*Absinthe*. "A pale green liquor" is a peculiar definition.

*Accordés* and *affamé*. Why register these forms in addition to the infinitive?

*Avec*. "With" is not sufficient for *s'enfuit avec* (174, 16).

*Déplaître*. *Ne vous déplaît* (178, 13) is not satisfactorily cared for by the simple "displease."

*Dire*. The idiomatic English for the use on 162, 20, is "to think!"

*Du* has no definition fitting *monsieur du corbeau* (178, 20).

*Galon*, to be sure, is defined as "lace" by the dictionaries, but that word signifies to most English-speaking people what the French mean when they say *dentelle* (cf. 147, 20).

*Grand* has no definition suiting *quatre grands jours* (136, 12, and note).

*Là*. *C'est là* (178, 9) does not appear here or elsewhere.

*Montagne*. It seems pretty certain that the idiomatic equivalent for the use on page 104, 3, etc., is "the mountains," not the singular.

*Par* has no definition to suit *par un clair matin* (158, 3).

*Pêche miraculeuse* (161, 28) needs the stock English equivalent "draught," for *pêche*, but only "fishing" appears.

*Thénardier* (la, 125, 10, etc.). This sorry figure would seem to merit inclusion along with the other proper names.

*Vas* should be recorded separately, not under *va* (cf. *venez*).

*Vive la France* has the rather wooden rendering, "Long live France."

*Volupté*. Something better than "voluptuousness" seems needed for 138, 8.

*Vos* should be entered separately; it appears under *voire*.

The most novel and useful part of this book (for teachers who are sufficiently progressive to understand and use it) is the phonetic transcription of the earlier texts. This difficult task is accomplished with such rare success that criticism will seem audacious, especially as "the pronunciation transcribed is from the reading . . . of a native Parisian." Fortunately there is little to criticize in the way of actual error. The almost unavoidable typographical slips have been practically all eliminated in the second printing, now available; though I find [ɛs] (73, 27) for [ɛ s] and [kôtrə] (49, 2) and [fô] (15, 7) for [kô:trə] and [fô]. Admitting justification for difference of pronunciation in the ending *-ation*, it would seem wiser to adopt either [a] or [ɑ] consistently; but [ɛtalasjô] (95, 26) conflicts with [eksklaməsjô] (97, 14) and [admirasjô] (97, 15). [sezi], with [e] for [ɛ] (25, 13), is heard but uncommon. The same would be true for [rwa] (13, 7) and [krwa] (19, 13), with [a] instead of [ɑ]. [katrijem] (11, 14) and [krije] (13, 28) are likewise less usual than the forms without [j].

The three important matters about which reasonable people may disagree and yet all be right—linking, quantity, and the

suppression of mute *e*—offer several debatable cases, though I have no wish to press unduly any fallacious idea of impossible consistency.

By dropping mute *e* a number of harsh consonant groups have been created,—[arbr ki] (11, 4), [rəturnra] (15, 4), [cən sra] (33, 1), [ty dvra] (33, 30), etc. With these we may compare [ty dəvra] (35, 12), [akərdə trwa] (3, 17), [rəstə po:vr] (7, 27), [e kə sɛl] (19, 21), etc. The groups [rpr], [rnr], etc., seem especially sophisticated for beginners.

Under linking one might contrast [vɛ a] (3, 15) with [vɛz aɛ] (23, 5). On the whole, the tendency in this book is to link too much rather than too little; e.g., [āvɛrz ɛl] (65, 21). The verb final is usually carried over, but not in [prəmne ā lō] (43, 28) and [parle avɛk] (59, 14).

The absence of any sign to indicate the usual *liaisons* is rather unfortunate, especially in those cases in which two words linked are on different lines (e.g., 3, 12 and 13), since the letter linked is always included bodily in the word in which it occurs orthographically [nuz avō].

The usual linking sign is employed for another valuable purpose,—namely to attract to a preceding vowel an occasional consonant that, by the dropping of a mute *e*, might be forced by the student into an uncomfortable consonant group; e.g., [turnā-l do] (51, 9). At times this excellent device seems overworked.

The matter of quantity seems to be the least satisfactory element in the phonetic text. Too many vowels are marked long, length being indicated in all doubtful words and even in some for which there is no authority, and no allowance having been made for group stress. Among proclitic cases in which length seems unwisely indicated are [grā:d rɪfɛs] (7, 17), [mefā:nt fam] (9, 19; 13, 18), [vɛ:r le fidɛ:l] (23, 23), [tɛ:t ba:s] (29, 25), etc., etc. In such cases length can hardly be assumed unless the syllable be stressed; hence the [vɛr mwa] of 63, 9 is the correct reading. Likewise, in adverbs, the reading [kuraʒøzmā]<sup>1</sup> (19, 1) seems preferable to [kyrjø:zmā] (15, 22) and [lō:gmā] (45, 23).

Other debatable cases of length are the following:— On page 71 [arɛta:m] occurs close to [arivam].—*Prêtre* without length (23, 21) and *capitaine* and *romaine* (21, 20; 17, 24) with it seem peculiar. The [sɛ:ʒ ki] of 15, 10, is perhaps *possible* if we assume a pause after *singe*; therefore the [sɛ:ʒ ki]<sup>2</sup> of 15, 20, seems less likely, since the close association which brings about devocalization would tend to render the lengthening of *singe* improbable.—[tuʒu:rz ɛtɛ] (19, 7) is a very extreme case of applying the “rules” of length.

<sup>1</sup>The fifth character represents the sound of the initial consonant in *jardin*. Our printer has not the correct I. P. symbol.

<sup>2</sup>The second consonant here should bear a sign of devocalization but our printer has not the proper I. P. symbol.

The omission of any indication of breath-grouping would have been better understood if the quantity mark had been used as a guide for pause and stress; as matters now stand, the reader will have to depend upon punctuation and what help he can get from the omission or retention of mute *e*.

Devocalization is carefully indicated throughout the book.

The "table of French sounds" (p. ix) is evidently intended primarily to define the A. P. I. symbols, since the authors "take it for granted that the student has been taught the French sounds and knows how they differ from the English." This being the case, why is not the French word sufficient for this purpose without English "approximates"? There are two departures from the conventional A. P. I. alphabet,—(ō) instead of [ō] (which can be commended upon pedagogical grounds), and [g] instead of the I. P. sign (which has no real importance). As English approximates defining the nasals, there are words containing *m* and *n*; this seems unwise especially *sunk*, with its *ng* sound. Likewise the use of German *ü* and *ö* for [y] and [ø] is simply begging the question; even a clumsy English approximation is more helpful. The protest against the *ni* of *union* as an approximate equivalent of [ɲ] seems excessive, since its defect is trifling and can be easily corrected; whereas the suggestion of the *ng* of *singer* is a case of substituting the fire for the frying pan, for the acoustic and physiological contrast between [ɲ] and [ŋ] is sharp enough to those who have heard and imitated the provincial French [alman].

One incidental problem—from the pedagogical point of view—is the question as to just how our elementary students are going to be persuaded to take kindly to these "queer phonetic signs." This problem the Smith-Greenleaf *Reader*—like all the rest—leaves untouched.

The foregoing criticisms indicate few serious defects, and concerning many of them there will be respectable differences of opinion. The book is a real contribution to the study of French upon a sound phonetic basis, and a well edited reader into the bargain. It remains to be seen whether the American teaching profession is capable of appreciating work of this sort.<sup>1</sup>

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**LE PETIT JOURNAL.** Doubleday, Page and Company, Garden City, New York. Published twice monthly from October to May, inclusive (16 issues). Single copies, \$0.10; subscription, 16 issues, \$1.50. Bulk rates for single issues or yearly subscriptions, when sent to one address. Page: 4 12-inch columns,

<sup>1</sup>This review has profited by suggestions from Professor E. F. Hacker of the Ohio State University.

44 ems wide. Sheet:  $10\frac{1}{2}$  x 14 inches. *El Eco* is a similar publication in Spanish.

The *Journal* is a four-page illustrated paper, printed on glazed stock, singularly free from typographical errors, and is of the usual excellence of press-work issuing from the Doubleday Press.

The selections are neither edited nor rewritten, but are taken direct from such sources as *L'Illustration*, *L'Almanach Vermot*, *L'Intransigeant*, *Les Annales*, *Le Petit Bleu*, *Excelsior*, *L'Oeuvre*, *Le Matin* (Montréal), *Le Ciné pour Tous*, *La Vie au Grand Air*, *L'Echo de Paris*, *La Presse*, etc., etc.

A recent issue contains, for example, reprinted without error, a column-long discussion of the merits of "J'ai été à" and "Je suis allé" (*Les Annales*), an interesting section from Professor Chinard's recent speech before the Citizens' Conference on "Les Tendances actuelles de l'enseignement français," an illustrated article on the Musée de Cluny (*L'Illustration*), and a complete version of the "Marseillaise," accompanied by an account of the arrival at Strasburg of the commission from Milwaukee, bearing the gift of a bronze tablet in honor of Rouget de Lisle, and also by an explanation of the origin of the title of the song and of the seventh stanza. In addition, there are jokes and axioms from *L'Almanach Vermot*, a column of sporting news featuring the new sportswoman, and sundry articles on the money crisis, "street-car" currency, the price of milk, the day-light working laws and the bakeries, student hazing, and a column of news dispatches. The latter are a regular feature of each issue.

Wholly fresh and inspiring to teacher or to pupil, keeping both class and instructor "au courant" with all that vitally concerns the linguistically adopted country, clean and attractive in its makeup, with real humor, a judicious balance of material, and a lack of the "chevilles" to which such publications are so prone, without advertisements, and holding something of interest for everyone, it is indubitably the best thing of its kind.

For the French class, it may serve as material for class discussion, sight-reading, prepared résumés, illustration of grammatical usages, excess-credit reading, Club discussion, oral or written translation, catenization, assigned reports, bulletin-boards, and the like.

It can be used as soon as a class has a sound, analytical reading knowledge of the language, since its difficulties, by reason of the keen interest vested in the subject matter, will whet rather than discourage the ambition of the student. It issues a challenge that even the lukewarm or jaded student cannot resist. It should have a wide "clientèle."

O. F. BOND

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FARINA. *FRA LE CORDE D'UN CONTRABASSO*. (The University of Chicago Italian Series.) Edited by ELSIE Schobinger, A. M. and Ethel Preston, Ph.D. Chicago. The University of Chicago Press. 122 pp. 16 mo.

In this age of an overflow of college texts in the Romance languages, many of them hurriedly and carelessly put together, it is a great pleasure to see a text so carefully edited as *Fra le corde d'un contrabasso*. The book is a worthy successor to the earlier texts in the series. Its editors are to be congratulated.

In the Preface Professor Wilkins, editor of the series, says—"Since *Fra le corde d'un contrabasso* is naturally adapted by the simplicity of its style for use at an early stage in the study of Italian, the present edition has been prepared with a view to the needs of elementary students." This statement is entirely justified by the work of the two editors of the story. From the Introduction on the life of Farina by Miss Schobinger to the Vocabulary at the end of the book every care has been taken to guide the elementary student over the rough places and to teach him just what he should know for an understanding of the story. He is not burdened with learned philological information, designed to show the inexhaustible knowledge of the editors, and far too deep for him to understand. On the contrary he is taught Italian, and that by sound methods.

The notes, in which the major part of this teaching is done, are very full and always clear. Every word that might cause a misunderstanding of the text seems to have been carefully weighed. Idiomatic expressions have been translated into suitable English equivalents and at the same time have been interpreted accurately with reference to their special use in the text. This method of editing is thoroughly sound. As examples note the following: note 2 to p. 16 (p. 71) "Anche Orazio ci casca. Horace, too, is on the edge." i.e., "is on the point of falling in love." The phrase *cascarci* is used in Italian of "falling into a trap." Or again, note 1 to p. 37 (p. 75) "E me l'accoppa," and she's done for. The force of the *me* is too slight to be accounted for in translation." Notes such as these give the student all the help he needs in understanding the passage in question and at the same time they give him information of a general nature on Italian grammar. It would have been well had all the notes stopped with explanations such as these, without adding references to Wilkins' First Italian Book, which, not being a reference grammar treating the subject exhaustively, often adds nothing to the statement of the editors in their own notes.

Other notes of a literary character are inserted here and there to emphasize the author's style. While they are perhaps over the heads of the "elementary students," they do not in the least



invalidate Professor Wilkins' opening remarks in the Preface and they ought to be very helpful to more advanced students who might use the text in a study of the Italian short story. Thus the book is made to serve a double purpose.

Not the least attractive feature of the book is the very carefully prepared Vocabulary. Very few words have been omitted and few are misspelled. *Panca*, p. 64 of the text is not in the Vocabulary and *cavallino*, p. 87 of the Vocabulary is spelled *cavellino* on p. 24 of the text.

In addition to this evidence of care, certain phrases which are given under the index word in the Vocabulary are translated with a nicety that shows a great deal of thought. Note for example: *basta che vada* under *bastare* (p. 85) "he has only to go"; *bisogna che vada* under *bisognare* (p. 85) "he must go"; *non ci entro* under *entrare* (p. 93) "I have nothing to do with it"; *poco da sperare* under *sperare* (p. 116) "small ground for hope." These are examples picked at random. There are many more equally as good.

As a literary text *Fra le corde d'un contrabasso* is splendid. But it is exclusively literary. Why was it not made more practical? Editors of French and Spanish texts have been using the Questionnaire and Composition Exercises, and even Verb Drills and Grammar Reviews to advantage. Would not the same material work well in the teaching of Italian? We have relied too long on the old type of text edited primarily for use as a reader. It is high time to bring this language before the student thru more practical methods of instruction. Professor Wilkins in his First Italian Book has followed a good trail already blazed by others in French and Spanish for the study of the language in the early stages of the student's career. Let us hope that the editors of the University of Chicago Italian Series will see fit to incorporate some of the recognized conversation and composition material into their reading texts in the near future.

T. A. E. MOSELEY

Virginia Military Institute

*SPANISH-AMERICAN SHORT STORIES*. Edited by CHAS. ALFRED TURRELL. IX+201 pages. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1920.

The half-dozen interesting stories fill some fifty-five pages of text. Twenty-six pages are devoted to exercises, consisting of questions in Spanish and of sentences for translation into Spanish. Twenty-four pages of "grammatical notes" follow. A verb appendix with a table of numerals occupies twenty-three pages, and a vocabulary of seventy pages completes the book. There is a good map (in colors) of "La America Latina," and seven suitable illustrations are provided.

The text is fairly difficult on account of the wealth of idiom and the wide range of vocabulary. I question whether it could be used to advantage before the third year of high school. The amount of editorial matter is perhaps some index of the difficulty of the text. Twenty-four pages of notes and seventy of vocabulary to fifty-five pages of text do not indicate a very simple text.

As in the case of an earlier volume in this series, Bardin's "Historicas Leyendas Mejicanas," reviewed in these columns in Dec., 1920,—the excellent grammatical notes form an important feature of the book. In many cases they supplement the ordinary grammar, explaining clearly points that are often either passed over hastily or omitted altogether. They are, furthermore, complete in themselves, giving the student in the most convenient form possible all the grammatical information that he can need for understanding the text. A very brief inspection will convince one of their value and of the need for them in this text.

The vocabulary is compact and appears to be complete.

Letters have been lost in the following cases: page 3, line 16, a ma for alma; page 12, line 26, amento for lamento; page 14, line 10, pod do for podido; page 21, line 8, os for los.

An attractive feature of this book is its size. It can be finished by a class within a reasonable time. Somewhat advanced pupils, who have already acquired a good working vocabulary, will enjoy reading it.

JOEL HATHEWAY

*ESPAÑA Y LA AMÉRICA ESPAÑOLA.* Edited by GIOVANNI TERZANO of Ohio State University. XV+318 pages. The John C. Winston Co. 1921.

The text consists of a series of selections from the works of the best Spanish and Spanish-American writers. The editor has succeeded in making an exceedingly interesting and appropriate series of excerpts and has endeavored to grade them in order of difficulty.

Each selection is preceded by a biographical note and by a statement of grammatical topics for special study; and is followed by a set of exercises comprising questions, lists of important locations to be memorized, sentences to be completed by the learner, and an exercise in composition, consisting of detached and numbered sentences. Practically all the editorial work is in Spanish. A select vocabulary and an index complete the book. Suitable maps and some twenty good illustrations are provided.

In his preface, the editor frankly expresses his dislike for the elementary Spanish readers, which devote so much attention to *realia* and are manufactured especially for class-room purposes, and states his belief that a pupil who has mastered the elements

of the grammar and has acquired a vocabulary of from 500 to 700 words, should be introduced to Spanish literature. He considers that his book may be taken up "about the beginning of the fourth term in a Junior High School, or of the third term in Senior High School, and about the middle of the second term in Colleges and Universities."

"Term" is a rather indefinite word but I assume that it has about the meaning of "half-year" or "semester." I understand therefore that this book is intended for pupils who have had about a year and a half of Spanish in the Junior High School,—that is, for pupils beginning the second half of the eighth year of school work, pupils who are roughly speaking about thirteen years old. For such pupils I believe that the book is altogether too difficult. The constructions are too varied, the vocabulary is too advanced. The book is hard enough for high school pupils in their third year of the study of Spanish. College students who have had some training in other languages could use it in the second semester of their Spanish course but would lose nothing if given easier reading material throughout the first year.

It is hard to comment upon a select vocabulary. If, however, the author intended to omit "words alike or nearly alike in Spanish and in English" he has certainly been generous in including such words as *absoluto*, *abstracto*, *absurdo*, *accidente*, *acento* . . . *importante*, *imposible*, *impulso*, . . . *lamentas*, *lista*, *lívido*, *localidad*, etc., etc. Those of us who like complete vocabularies will not quarrel with Professor Terzano for having put so much into this vocabulary, but rather for having left so much out. This kind of vocabulary, by the way, does not seem to be appropriate for a book which the editor intends for use in junior high schools.

The omission from the vocabulary of the word *piltrafa* must have been an oversight. There appears to be no English word of similar form and meaning.

Unfortunately this book is marred by a rather large number of misprints. The following may be noted: Page 21, line 22, *¿ Que?* for *¿ Qué?*; *¿ Donde?* for *¿ Dónde?*; page 31, line 2, *nogociado* for *negociado*; page 85, line 3, *fundo* for *fundó*; page 105, line 17, *somo* for *como*; page 107, note 2, *otros tiempo*; page 148, line 16, *trunfal* for *triunfal*; page 150, line 21, *non* for *no*; page 184, line 1, *manso* for *manos*; page 199, line 5, *tema* for *temo*; page 240, line 3, *lo for los*; and there are still others.

Mr. Terzano's interesting reader is to be cordially recommended for use with college classes or with advanced classes in high schools.

JOEL HATHEWAY

*FIRST COURSE IN SPANISH.* An Elementary Spanish Grammar, by E. W. OLMSTED, University of Minnesota. Holt & Company. 1920, XII+393 pages.

This book may be used for grammar-translation or for modified-direct method teaching since it has some of the features of both methods.

The book contains: Introduction (14 pages), XLV Lessons (219 pages), Appendix (87 pages), Vocabulary (60 pages), Index (9 pages). Its general appearance is good though some of the illustrations are not very clear. There is perhaps enough material for two years of high school or one full year in college. The Appendix is very full and furnishes enough reference material for use later in the course. It treats the following subjects many of which are often given in the body of the book in grammars: (1) the verb, (2) lists of irregular verbs, (3) the infinitive, (4) cardinals, ordinals and fractions, (5) weights, measures and money, (6) augmentatives and diminutives, (7) interjections and idioms, (8) examples of epistolary style, announcement forms and poems for memory drill. Of these, at least the last four are best placed in the Appendix, since it seems to me that they only serve to confuse the beginning student when placed in the body of the book.

Turning to a consideration of the form and content of the Introduction and Lessons we find the following features: a simple and in most cases accurate introductory chapter on the subjects which are usually found in such chapters; short and well worded grammar explanations in English which the beginner can understand, followed by an English-Spanish vocabulary and the following exercises: (1) *cuestionario grammatical*, (2) *ejercicio oral*, (3) *ejercicio de lectura*, (4) *conversación*, and (5) *ejercicio de traducción*; double nomenclature; verb drills in 23 out of the 45 lessons (not in full sentence form as should be); connected reading and conversation exercises which are really interesting and instructive but with some lack of variety.

A good feature of the book which is later nullified in the Appendix is the placing of the present subjunctive as polite imperative early in the lessons before taking up the real imperative forms. In the Appendix they are both given under the heading of the Imperative. It has been mentioned that there is lack of variety in the daily exercises. In spite of the fact that many of them are of an interesting nature, the rhythmic repetition of the exercises in the daily recitations will grow monotonous to both teacher and student unless aided by some live reading book fairly early in the course.

The proofreading has been poorly done. As a result there are many mistakes.

The following errors, omissions and misstatements are noted by page, and line when necessary. Page 4 section 3, *Note*,—*u* is

*silent after g and q before e or i (i.e., guiar, quedar),* also Page 7, first note, has no mention that *u* is sounded when written *ü* as in *vergüenza, averigüets*, etc.; Page 5, section II, second paragraph, should read "*In Spanish 'b' and 'v' are pronounced alike, and are often (incorrectly) interchanged in spelling.*" Page 6, line 2, strike out (*except h*); Page 10, (2) has decided lack of consistency in the statement concerning local pronunciations of such words as *las mujeres*; Page 10, footnote, not clear nor even comprehensible; Page 11, line 2, should give *je—jefe* and *ji—jinete* as other examples; Page 12(e) add translation *it* to *él*, '*he*,' '*him*' for sake of clearness in many cases; Page 37 (Conversación), 10, *cuantos* should be accented; Page 39, line 2, *antes del* should be *delante del* to avoid confusion as regards place; Page 139, note 4 is not needed; Page 161, section 187, *se* should have accent; Page 195, Note 1, gives reference: (Cf. section, 230, note). There is no such note to section 230; the note is to section 231; Page 241, the forms *hable Vd.*, *hablemos nosotros*, *hablen Vds.* should not be included under the heading "Imperative" as it is very confusing to student; Page 247 and following, the conditional is not classed as a tense of the Indicative as it is in the previous regular verb models; Page 277 the meaning *to make use of* is not assigned to *servirse*; Page 309, second line from bottom of page, *él* should not have accent. There are also several misprints in the Vocabulary.

In spite of the errors and misstatements that have been noted this book is well worth using as it has a good many new features and is a teachable and well arranged grammar. It will hold an important place among the books on the market. It represents a step in the right direction of teaching Spanish in Spanish in our schools and colleges.

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## Correspondence

### HISTORY AS AN ART

(A note on *Le Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard*)

Editor MODERN LANGUAGE JOURNAL:

Readers of Anatole France will remember a discussion between Sylvestre Bonnard and Gélis in regard to the claims of history as a science. The old academician is endeavoring to inspire his impetuous pupil with respect for the generation of scholars who, he says, made of history a science governed by rigid laws. Gélis replies that history is not and cannot be a science but an art in which the imagination alone brings success; the *rigid laws* are in reality only the taste or the caprice of the artist who chooses his *facts* and his *authorities* for sentimental reasons. "Dans tous les arts l'artiste ne peint que son âme." Here surely is impressionism of which Anatole France is one of the prophets. Let us note in passing that here Gélis is on the side of impressionism while Sylvestre is the dogmatist. Then there comes a sudden change of rôles as the discussion turns on the novels of Walter Scott, which Sylvestre defends against the iconoclastic Gélis. "Tout le passé vit dans ses admirables romans; c'est de l'histoire, c'est de l'épopée! —C'est de la friperie," replies Gélis. How does it happen that the champion of history as a science upholds Walter Scott and even identifies history and épopée? And Gélis, to be logical, should accept Sir Walter as the prince of historians, as one who realized just what history is and worked accordingly. But youth is never logical and Gélis was a lover of paradox; it is Sylvestre's attitude which needs a gloss.

The explanation of the anomaly has not, as far as I am aware, been sought by commentators. I should like to propose one which is not, I think, devoid of interest. In *La Vie Littéraire* there is constant repetition of such ideas as these: "On ne sort jamais de soi-même . . . La critique est, comme la philosophie et l'histoire, une espèce de roman à l'usage des esprits avisés et curieux, et tout roman, à le bien prendre, est une autobiographie." Such judgments offer reasons for identifying the writer, at least to some extent, with the characters he has added to fiction. Sylvestre Bonnard is universally accepted as one of the spokesmen of his protean creator. In the discussion of history he appears for an instant in the opposition and his mantle falls on Gélis. The author seems suddenly to realize that he and Sylvestre are not of the same generation. A moment later, in speaking of Scott,



Sylvestre again becomes the mouthpiece of Anatole France. After all, both are true to their own time on this point. Balzac, it will be remembered, was a great admirer of Scott, and Zola, who hails Balzac as the father of realistic fiction, was scandalized by such a vagary. Anatole France does not share Zola's opinion, but there can be little doubt that Scott was losing his prestige in the third quarter of the last century in France.

In the second volume of *La Vie Littéraire* there is some fun at the expense of a philosopher who had launched an attack on the pretensions of history to scientific exactitude. The philosopher would reduce history to a simple compilation of statistics. In reviewing the work Anatole France comes upon some of his own ideas and promptly claims his property, "Je les avais jetées (ces raisons) légèrement et par badinage il y a dix ans, dans un petit livre intitulé le *Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard*. Je n'y tenais point. Mais maintenant que je vois qu'elles valent quelque chose, je m'empresse de les reprendre." And he quotes a page of the remarks of Gélis: "Qu'est-ce que l'histoire? etc." The nonchalant tone, *je n'y tenais point*, must not of course be taken seriously, for the ideas expressed by Gélis are at the very core of the doctrine of universal relativity so dear to the author. That he, like Gélis, believes history at its best an imaginative art, and like Sylvestre, would recognize Scott as one of its masters, is clear from the conclusion of the essay. "Je sais aussi bien que vous que l'histoire est fausse et que tous les historiens, depuis Hérodote jusqu'à Michelet, sont des conteurs de fables. Mais cela ne me fâche pas. Je veux bien qu'un Hérodote me trompe avec goût; je me laisserai éblouir par le sombre éclat de la pensée aristocratique d'un Tacite; je referai avec délices les rêves de ce grand aveugle qui vit Harold et Frédégonde. Je regretterais même que l'histoire fût plus exacte. Je dirais volontiers avec Voltaire: 'Réduisez-la à la vérité, vous la perdez, c'est Alcine dépouillé de ses prestiges.' . . . L'histoire narrative . . . est encore, avec la poésie, la plus fidèle image que l'homme ait tracée de lui-même.

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#### THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

*Managing Editor, THE MODERN LANGUAGE JOURNAL:*

At the Trade Congress called by the American Chamber of Commerce in Mexico City on February 19, 1919, a resolution was offered by Mr. Will A. Peairs of Des Moines, Iowa, calling for the naming of a committee to investigate the practicability of interchange of students between the United States and Mexico. The proposition was made for four distinct reasons: 1st, The very

satisfactory results attained by such an interchange with Spain, Venezuela, Cuba, and other Latin countries; 2nd, The necessity of a better understanding between the United States and Mexico; 3rd, The rise of interest in things Hispanic; and 4th, The development of the Foreign Trade.

The last was, for the Chamber of Commerce, perhaps the most potent reason, for it well knew that a sound foreign trade could only flourish on a basis of social and political understanding. To make this a possibility then, the Committee appointed by the Chamber of Commerce began a careful study of the proposition. Correspondence was begun with the colleges, universities and commercial concerns of the United States and a fine response was received. Opportunities were offered in all parts of the country, and at least seventy schools opened their doors to Mexican students who might be prepared for the work. This marks the beginning of one of the most important interchanges of students between the two countries, and the laying of foundations which are sure to last thruout the ages. The reception these representatives from Mexico have received has been in the true American spirit, seen at its best.

To be sure, the growth of this movement will be slow, for Mexico is still suffering from the aftermath of its many revolutions and has just evolved from a severe financial crisis, in consequence of which many of her students are not able to finance themselves in the States, and the Foundation has not as yet a sufficient sum back of it to make possible the help which ought to be forthcoming. The Carnegie Foundation, Institute of International Education and the Commonwealth Fund of New York are interested in the project, but so far have not seen their way clear to back the movement as it needs. But this assistance is looked for in the near future.

One of the projects growing out of the Foundations' interest in interchange is related with the Summer Session of the National University of Mexico. Sr. Gumaro Villalobos, the chairman of the Sub-committee in Mexico and a congressman from the State of Jalisco, conceived this idea after a trip thru the western part of the United States. He presented it to the President, Alvaro Obregón, who not only sanctioned the plan but gave it his instant approval and support. He wrote a letter to this effect to the Secretary of the Foundation and likewise consulted with the National Department of Education to put the plan into operation. Dr. Vasconcelos, Rector of the National University, named Prof. Sanchez, who had had experience with a like interchange with Spain, to work out the preliminaries. Other professors, especially those with American University training, lent themselves to the project and offered their services. President Obregón, in his

natural spirit of generosity, offered free transportation both ways from the Mexican border to Mexico City (or any other destination) with free passports for all those who were bona fide teachers of Spanish in Universities, colleges or high-schools of the United States. This offer went out in May and June, 1921, to nearly all schools of America and met a most hearty response. Nearly one hundred teachers found their way to Mexico City during the summer of 1921, of whom about forty belonged to the first cycle. The courses ran from July 1st to July 15th and from August 1st to September 15th, overlapping each other. Courses were offered in the Spanish Language, History of Spanish and Latin-American Literature, Social and Political History, Contemporary Political History, Archaeology, Colonial Art in Mexico, Conversation, Dictation, Reading, and Interpretation of Texts. The work was exceedingly helpful in acquiring the language or in gaining fluency in the vernacular, while the professors were untiring in their efforts to assist the students in reaching their aim. They gave unstintingly of their time and knowledge in accompanying the students to both near and distant places of interest if it was in the interest of the students. They secured free tickets for us to all concerts and open air performances that one and all bore testimony to the high musical attainments of the Mexican people. We Americans were almost overwhelmed with courtesies of all kinds, so we felt impelled to reciprocate, if even in a small measure. On August 4th we tendered a banquet at the Palm Garden of Hotel Geneve to President Obregón and the faculty of the National University. The large hall was elaborately decorated in Mexican and American colors, expressed both in flags and flowers. After the customary toasts an address of appreciation, printed on parchment, together with our signatures, was presented to the Rector of the University. The banquet was a great success and the Mexican guests were loud in praise of the American way of entertaining. One of the Mexican professors at the banquet asked of one of us why we did so much for them. The answer was that the same might likewise be asked of them, when he very frankly admitted, "But we have a motive in being nice to you, we want your friendship. But you don't want anything of us,—so why do you do it?" Unfortunately, President Obregón was indisposed the evening of the banquet and sent his regrets. However, he sent us an invitation to tea at the Castle Chapultepec for August 6th. I cannot say enough in praise of the handsome manner in which President Obregón entertained us on that occasion. The liveried footmen were in evidence everywhere, leading us to the great hall of the Ambassadors where we were to be presented to the President. He was exceedingly

gracious and chatted with all of those who could speak Spanish. He conducted us through a large part of the castle and in the courteous Spanish formula told us the Castle was ours. Finally, tea was served in the large dining room of state, the tables being laid with the Maximilian silver, china and cut-glass. Never did we sit down to a more sumptuous feast, nor were we more royally entertained. Dr. Vasconcelos, who speaks more English than President Obregón, addressed the guests in the President's behalf. After speaking of the hope of better understanding and cordial relations between the two countries and our opportunities of furthering these endeavors, he said: "This dining room in which you now are, has never before been used except for kings, high dignitaries or ambassadors, but President Obregón wishes me to say that Mexico has never been more highly honored than by its present guests." When the social hour after tea had passed and we had enjoyed to the fullest extent the grand vista from the large verandas, we were invited to go to the theatre at the Castle to see a film of the beauties of Mexico. At eleven we returned home feeling that we had spent a most delightful evening.

On August 12th we were tendered a banquet by the professors of the University at the School of Fine Arts. Nothing was wanting that belongs to a Mexican entertainment, not even the individual presents to the guests consisting of pottery, typical of the country.

A few of us had the opportunity of visiting in real Mexican homes. They offer a particular charm, artistically arranged with their statuary and fine paintings, but are seldom opened to strangers. This is perhaps the only criticism I have to offer, that Mexican homes are absolutely closed to foreigners, to whom, thereby, a fine opportunity of learning to know and appreciate the better class of Mexicans is lost.

I could elaborate on Mexican life, politics, social conditions, etc., but feel it would not come within the scope of the MODERN LANGUAGE JOURNAL.

As a closing word, let me recommend to all teachers of Spanish a summer's stay in the land across the Rio Grande, which will offer speaking facility in the language, a summer in a most delightfully cool climate, an opportunity to become acquainted with a people much maligned in newspapers as a nation of bandits, but who in reality have fine qualities with a great future and a vision to attain it.

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